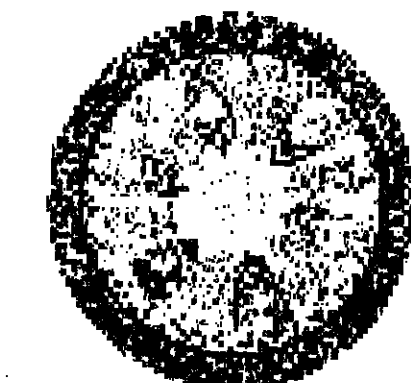
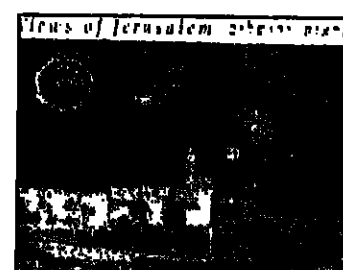


CALENDARS 1995/96

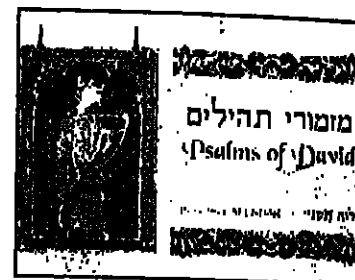
תשנ"ו



Chanan Mezar Jerusalem Art Calendar
A new selection of seven Judaica themes. 2 months per page. Hanging size: 32 cm H x 18 cm W (12 1/2" x 6 1/2")
JP Price: NIS 55



Views of Jerusalem
Photographic calendar with different angles, new scenes, room for appointments; candlelighting times. Listing of holidays, 12 months. Size: 21 cm H x 27 cm W (8 3/4" x 10 5/8")
JP Price: NIS 29



Psalms of David
Reproductions from a handwritten illuminated minute Psalter on parchment from the Florentine workshop, 16th century. Size: 18 cm H x 27 cm W (8 3/4" x 10 5/8")
JP Price: NIS 31

Chanan Mezar Judaica Art Calendar
Spectacular illuminations in the tradition of ancient Jewish manuscripts. Large format art calendar embellished with gold. Hanging size: 34 cm H x 24 cm W (13 1/2" x 9 1/2")
JP Price: NIS 62



Illuminations: Arthur Soyka's Haggadah
A Jewish Calendar from the Library of Congress. Plenty of room for appointments, full explanation of each plate. 16 months, 1 month per page. Size: 30.5 cm x 33.5 cm (12 1/4" x 13")
JP Price: NIS 42



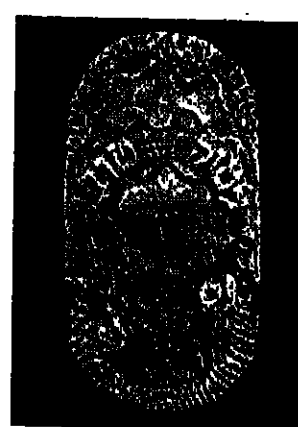
A Time to Sing and Dance
Beautiful calendar from the Jewish Museum's collection, plenty of space for appointments, Jewish and Gregorian dates, NYC candlelighting times. Twelve art plates of many styles, from Raphael Soyer to unknown primitives. Size: 32 cm H x 33 cm (12 3/4" x 13")
JP Price: NIS 42



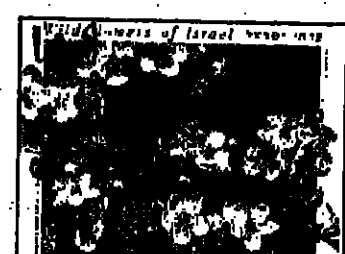
The Jewish Calendar with Illustrations from the Collection of the Jewish Museum in Prague
Stunning photographs of objects, paintings and manuscripts, 18 months, large write-in spaces, national and Jewish holidays, weekly Torah reading, candlelighting times, list of Jewish holidays through 2001. Size: 29 cm H x 33 cm W (11 3/8" x 13")
JP Price: NIS 42



For Jerusalem: Israeli Artists Calendar
12 months/12 paintings - In homage to Jerusalem, from "old masters" such as Guttman and Zartzy to contemporary painters. Size: 24 cm H x 33 cm W (9 3/4" x 13 1/4")
JP Price: NIS 31



Rediscovered Treasures
Judaica from the Museum of Ethnography and Crafts in Lvov, Ukraine, courtesy of Beth Hatekva. Bold modern metallo-studded graphics highlighting the old-fashioned religious artifacts with stunning detail. Room for appointments, 12 months, display sized 29 cm H x 27 cm W (11 1/2" x 10 5/8")
JP Price: NIS 55

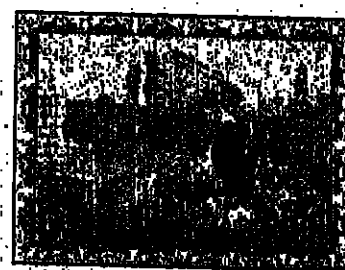
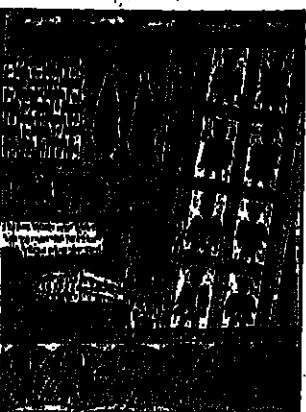


Wildflowers
Our "perennial" favorite calendar with bright full-color photos by Dr. David Daron; room for appointments; candlelighting times, 12 months. Size: 21 cm H x 27 cm W (8 3/4" x 10 5/8")
JP Price: NIS 29



ISRAEL: 1995-6
JERUSALEM: 1995-6
Panoramic views of Jerusalem and other parts of the country. Exceptionally beautiful shots. One month per page. Size: 28 cm H x 31 cm W (10 1/2" x 12")
JP Price: Each NIS 59

Shalom of Safed
Native paintings by Shalom "The Watchmaker" (1887-1980). 12 frameable plates, English/Yiddish/German, 12 months. Size: 24 cm H x 24.5 cm W (9 1/4" x 9 3/4")
JP Price: NIS 45



Bible Stories Art Calendar
Oleg Trakht (b. 1960, Russia). Illustrator and artist presents 12 plates with elaborate border in patterned, decorative style. Holiday listing in Hebrew, holidays in Hebrew and English, room for appointments. Size: 23 cm H x 33 cm W (9 1/4" x 13 1/4")
JP Price: NIS 31

Landscapes
This year's offering from the Society for the Protection of Nature presents 12 types of scenery, from dunes to craters. Display format, printed on chlorine-free paper. 12 mo. Hanging size: 47 cm H x 33 cm W (18 1/2" x 13")
JP Price: NIS 29



CALENDARS 1995/96 תשנ"ו
Presenting a new selection of calendars for the coming Jewish New Year; each contains Gregorian dates, Jewish and Israeli holidays.
For AIRMAIL delivery please add NIS 15 per calendar. For door-to-door delivery in Israel (where available), add NIS 15 per address.
Tel: Books, The Jerusalem Post, P.O. Box 91, Jerusalem 91000
Please send me the following calendars:

<input type="checkbox"/> Chanan Mezar Judaica Art Calendar	NIS 62	<input type="checkbox"/> Chanan Mezar Jerusalem Art Calendar	NIS 55
<input type="checkbox"/> A Time to Sing and Dance	NIS 42	<input type="checkbox"/> Illuminations: Arthur Soyka's Haggadah	NIS 42
<input type="checkbox"/> The Jewish Calendar	NIS 42	<input type="checkbox"/> Jerusalem: 1995-6	NIS 59
<input type="checkbox"/> Jerusalem: 1995-6	NIS 59	<input type="checkbox"/> Rediscovered Treasures	NIS 55
<input type="checkbox"/> For Jerusalem: Israeli Artists Calendar	NIS 31	<input type="checkbox"/> Shalom of Safed	NIS 45
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July 21, 1995

THE JERUSALEM POST
MAGAZINE

362
TAXI חונית

MEAN
STREETS

Hundreds of taxi drivers
work Friday nights because
the rates are higher --
but so are the risks

INSIDE: SPECIAL GOLDEN AGE SUPPLEMENT

THE JERUSALEM POST MAGAZINE

JULY 21, 1995
COVER PHOTO: MOSHE SHAI

- 8 MEMBERS ONLY**
Snobbery has come out of the closet and is no longer the preserve of the elite.
By Netty C. Gross
- 11 NIGHT RIDER**
Uri Bazaz has been driving a Tel Aviv cab for 25 years. Last Friday night, one wide-awake reporter went along for the ride.
By Sue Fishkoff
- 20 THE EYES OF THE COUNTRY**
You can pick cherries, swim in Brecht Ram or simply see the magnificent views from Mount Hermon. A visit to the Golan Heights is a great way to get away from summer in the city.
By Bruce Temkin

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SPECIAL GOLDEN AGE SUPPLEMENT: 18-19

Editor: CARL SCHRAG
Associate Editor: FERN ALLEN
Art Director: RUTH KOVEL
Copy Editor: DANI HOMBURG

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All correspondence must include a street address. The Magazine is not responsible for any unsolicited material submitted. No material will be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

SPECIAL DELIVERY

PERSONAL TOUCH

It is with interest that I read the criticism of Avraham Burg's appointment as head of the Jewish Agency (Letters, July 7).

I would like to suggest, however, that perhaps it takes a person like Burg, without a string of academic qualifications, to understand the problems of new immigrants, most of whom are ordinary people.

My husband and I are South Africans who, due to the incorrect advice given to us by our aliya organization, have had to face an unnecessary multitude of problems.

In the year since our arrival, we have run the length and breadth of Israel's bureaucracy, approaching numerous officials at every level.

So far, Avraham Burg has been the only one to reply to our correspondence personally and, while nothing positive has materialized yet, he is the exception among numerous "better" qualified individuals from whom we haven't received so much as a flicker of acknowledgment.
Sharon Brodovsky
Ashkelon

VENERABLE INSTITUTIONS

As one who worked in the Jewish Agency in London in the traumatic years from the end of World War II until 1949, during which time the State of Israel was established, I should like to remind Avraham Burg that had it not been for the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency, he might not be sitting where he is today ("New Age Revolutionary," June 23).

It was in large part due to the efforts of these two organizations that the State of Israel was established at all. He should not be in too much of a hurry to dismantle venerable institutions; they still have their part to play. This country and the Diaspora are mutually interdependent and will probably remain so for many years to come.
Deanna White
Kfar Sava

MULTI-DISCIPLINED THINKERS

Mordechai Beck's perceptive review ("A New Beginning," June 23) of Aviva Gottlieb Zornberg's *Genesis: The Beginning of Desire* unfortunately includes - as does the book jacket itself - a too-facile comparison of the author with Nehama Leibowitz. While both these remarkable women are Torah teachers par excellence whose public classes are truly cultural "events," the projects they so brilliantly develop are, in fact, quite diverse.

Leibowitz systematically paves paths for the modern mind through the dense traditional interplay of Torah and commentary. Zornberg juxtaposes Torah thought with contemporary thought to create a modern, even post-modern, genre of *midrash*. Both are multi-disciplined thinkers of keen psychological insight, but one bores down into the many-sided *p'shet* of Torah, while the other flies out on the wings of *midrash*.

Leibowitz is rigorously rational, tightening thought; Zornberg is richly associative, loosening imagination. Leibowitz is the ultimate pedagogue, the master facilitator deftly enabling Torah and commentators to speak with their startling immediacy. Zornberg speaks for herself, the poet and philosopher, inviting us to "eavesdrop" on her exquisitely personal response to the dialogue of life and text.

Since, in addition to their different agendas, neither woman intends a feminist statement by her work, comparing their contributions by the lowest common denominator of gender does a disservice to both. That being said however, it is certainly noteworthy that the person who has done the most to broaden the study of Torah and commentary in the 20th century is a woman, and that it is now another woman who is charting new directions for Torah thought in the coming century.

Interestingly too, both women took the same path of combining intensive Jewish source study with academic literary discipline to

produce their fruitful and exciting syntheses. It whets the appetite for further Jewish cultural leaps, now that women are beginning to apply their intelligence and sensitivity to Talmud and Jewish law as well.
Ben and Judy Hollander
Jerusalem

CREDIT THAT WAS MISSING

I would like to point out an unfortunate omission in Cecil Bloom's review of *A Book That Was Lost and Other Stories* by S.Y. Agnon ("Agnon's Lonely People," June 23).

No mention was made of the enlightening work, of Anne Golomb Hoffman and Alan Mintz, the two editors of the anthology.

The editors' introduction and notes for each section of their selection of stories are most important and valuable for the American reader unfamiliar with Agnon's mystical and enigmatic art.
Rita Robinson
Tel Aviv

WASTED WORDS AND SPACE

I can't understand why, each week, half a page is devoted to the meaning of a word - I'm perfectly happy to learn a new word - on one line ("Mivchan America"). Why read incorrect definitions? I, like others, refer only to the correct answer.

There must be more relevant material to fill up a page.
L. Beame
Jerusalem

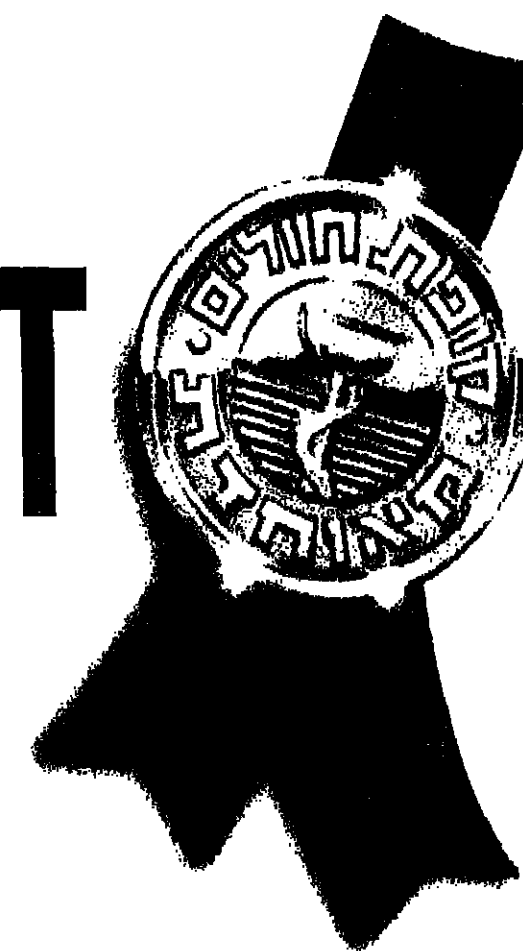
WRONG YEAR

Twice in her article ("Guard Our Tongue," May 26), Netty C. Gross mentions that the Hebrew Writers' Association was founded by Haim Nahman Bialik in 1937.

Bialik, our national poet, died in 1934, so the founding of that association must have taken place in a different year.

Y. Nathan
Haifa
Editor's note: The Hebrew Writers' Association was founded by Bialik in 1920.

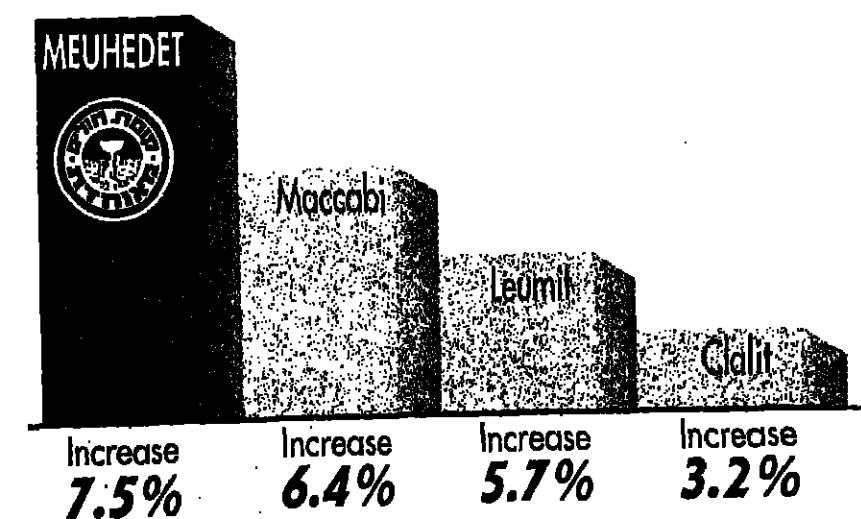
FIRST PLACE



A survey of the National Insurance Institute's record of Health Fund members, published in "Yediot Aharonot" ("Mammon" supplement) on 4.7.95 shows:

Kupat Holim Meuhedet is Israel's leading Health Fund!

Analysis of the record shows that Meuhedet's advantages make it the most attractive Health Fund to new members.



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We thank our members for continued support, and welcome our new members.



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the israel museum, jerusalem

EXHIBITIONS

The Enigma of Women from July 25
Surrealist prints and books stressing exaltation of women and love.

The Jews of India
Focus on the lives of the three Jewish communities of India, including the interior of a 16th-century Cochin synagogue.

Micromegas
Contemporary artists manipulate scale in representing the human figure, animals, objects and landscape.

Rita and Arturo Schwarz Collection of Israeli Art
Over 200 works by 30 artists, purchased especially for the Museum's 30th anniversary.

New Acquisitions in Contemporary Art
Major works by Eli Avidar, Hans Haacke, Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and others in honor of the Museum's 30th anniversary.

Genia Bengio
A selection of gouache stage designs and costume sketches for Israeli theaters.

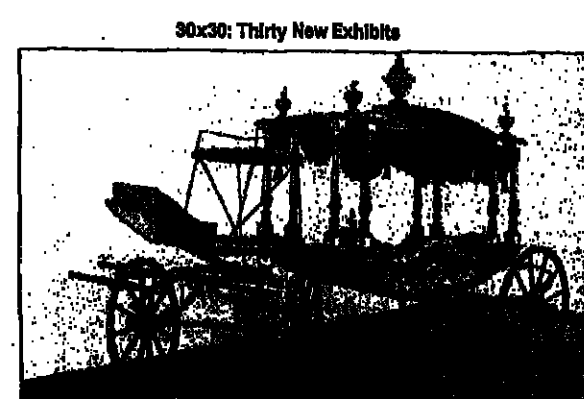
Patra in the News
Objects and coins testifying to Petra's prosperity.

Isabella Art
Inlaid metalwork - 13-15 cent. and illustrations of the Shahnameh, Iran and India, 14-16 cent.

My Way - Tim Gidal, Photographer
Works of the pioneer photographer who helped change the face of modern photo-journalism from the 1920s on.

Herbert: Past and Present
The image and place in our lives of a hero, with souvenirs in the Ruth Youth Wing.

Martin Szustak, French Designer
Designs, photos and drawings by one of the most lauded contemporary designers.



Thirty first-time exhibits from the Museum's various departments for the 30th anniversary. Guided tours in English; Mon. and Wed. at 12:30.

1930s Tel Aviv Film Posters
A selection of movie posters of "Little Tel Aviv" 1928-34, for the motion picture centennial.

On the Road to Edom
Discoveries from a 7th-century BCE Edomite shrine at Ein Hizze.

Guided tours in English; Mon. and Wed. at 12:30.

YOUTH WING
Tue., July 25:
4:30 p.m.: Story Hour with Victoria.

4:30 p.m.: Closing Event - Art Marathon Summer Camp. The public is invited to watch and participate.

Literary and Folklife Reading Room:
Sun., Mon., Wed., Thur., 2-4 p.m.; Tue., 4-7 p.m.
Story Hours: ages 4-7
Tue., 4:30 (Heb.); Wed., 4 p.m. (Eng.)

Samaritan Mosaic Floor
4th century CE, discovered in El Khirba. The Crucified Man from Givat Hamivtar. Casuary of a crucified male from the Roman era, together with a replica of his head found placed by an iron nail. At the Rockefeller Museum.

TICHO HOUSE
Anna Ticho - Judean Hills, 1970s
Sun., Mon., Wed., Thur., 10-5; Tue., 10-10; Fri., 10-2

Story-telling Theater. Ages 4-6. Sun., 4:30 p.m.

Library: Sun., Thur., 10-4; Fri., 10-12

Coffee Shop: Sun.-Thur., 10 a.m. to midnight; Fri., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Sat. night, all night.

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

CONCERTS: Performance by immigrant musicians. Fri., July 21, 11 a.m., Ticho House.

Mikhael Pollackin - piano: Bach, Schumann. Painting the Paintings with Music. Famed saxophonist Amy Lawrence will first play in the galleries and then host a jam session.

Wed., July 28, 9 p.m. Galleries and Auditorium.

Blue Moon - Style, Rhythm and Summer. Live music from the 60s under the stars with the Standards Orchestra. Sat., July 29, 8 p.m. Patio.

LECTURE: 30's Cinema: Hollywood versus Europe by Nissim Deyan. Tue., July 25, 8 p.m. Auditorium (in Hebrew).

GALLERY TALK: New Acquisitions in Contemporary Art by Mari Shalev. Tue., July 26, 7 p.m. (in Hebrew).

MOVIE: Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994, 117 min.). Dir. Mike Newell, with Hugh Grant, Andie MacDowell. Whitty and sophisticated comedy. July 22, 26 and 27, 9 p.m. Auditorium.

August 3 - Kiba Festival: aerobics and workshops, 4:30 p.m.

GUIDED TOURS IN ENGLISH
Meet at Main Building Information Desk for Museum Highlights: Sun., Mon., Wed., Thur., 11 a.m. & 3 p.m.

Fri., 11 a.m., Tue., 4:30 p.m. Archaeological Galleries: Mon., Thur., 3 p.m.

Judea & Ethnography: Sun., Wed., 2 p.m.

Shrine of the Book: At Shrine entrance Sun., Mon., Wed., Thur., 1:30 p.m.; Tue., 3 p.m.; Fri., 12:45 p.m.

Meet at Entrance Pavilion Information Desk for tours in: German Sun., 2 p.m. French Sun., 11 a.m.

Rockefeller Museum: Sun., 11 a.m.

VISITING HOURS

Sun., Mon., Wed., Thur., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tue., 4 p.m.-10 p.m.

Shrine of the Book also open Tue., 10 a.m.-10 p.m.

Fri., 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Information: 708511.

FAST FORWARD

OUT THERE

A childless vacation is packed with loads of guilt

By Herb Keiron

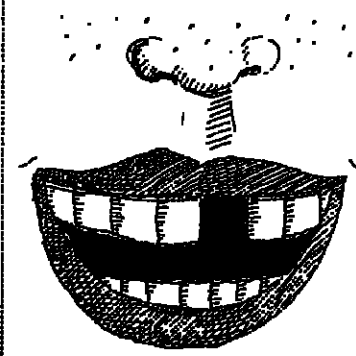
A friend of ours recently offered my wife and me a gift many parents only dream about: a couple of nights away from the children. "You guys go ahead," she told my wife one day. "I'll stay with the kids."

"Should we do it?" my wife asked when she came home. "Should we take her up on her offer?"

"Whaddaya nuts!" I said. "You didn't hug her on the spot? Of course we should do it. Call her now, before she talks to somebody, before she changes her mind."

It's not that — heaven forbid — we don't love and adore the kids. It's not that we don't love spending every waking hour with them. It's just that after six years and three children, the prospect of sleeping till nine, eating together

while we are both sitting down and having an uninterrupted conversation has a certain appeal. I couldn't believe the naivete of someone who suggested that we



take the two days and go camping at Horshat Tal.

"Whaddaya nuts," I said, perfecting that phrase. "It's hot there. You got to walk around. You got to work. You got to see

things. All I want to see is my pillow, an air conditioner and Jay Leno. That's a vacation."

The thought was intoxicating. Just me and the missus. Like it was in our twenties. Like it will be in our sixties. No screaming or pouting, no whining or shouting. No diapers to change, no drinks to get, no homework to haggle over. Amazing.

Until we started to factor in the guilt.

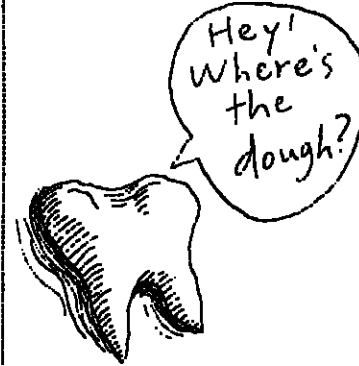
"I DON'T know," my wife said one night as we were discussing where to go. "Is it right to leave an 18-month-old baby with a complete stranger?"

"Well, Abra is not exactly a stranger," I said, sensing my wife weakening. "You have known her for 15 years."

"I know," she responded, "but you know what I mean. Your parents wouldn't have left you at that age."

She had a point. My parents wouldn't have

dreamed of leaving me at that age. In fact, they only left me once, when I was well into my teens. Until then, the only time either parent slept away from home was



when my mother was in the hospital.

The idea of taking a vacation without my sister and me just never occurred to my folks. It would have been like asking my

mom to fix the roof, or my dad to bake a cake.

I remember asking my mother about this once, as we were all packed into the car driving — and quarreling — from Colorado to California. "Honey," she said, "without you guys it wouldn't be a vacation." I believe she believed it. "Thanks, ma," I'm sure I said, comforted by the sentiment.

NOW, HOWEVER, that sentiment gnaws at me, makes me uneasy, pricks me with pangs of conscience. You see, I just don't share it.

In my jaundiced, perhaps selfish eyes, a vacation is precisely getting away from the kids. It's getting away from having to serve anybody, do anything. It's freedom from exertion, aggravation, tension. This apple has fallen far from the tree.

The seeds of my mother's sentiments were planted in me, but they didn't bear any fruit. I felt guilty, but it's a guilt I can live with. I feel guilty about a lot of things, and live with it perfectly.

I did spend precious vacation time wondering why my parents could never leave me, while I have no problem temporarily abandoning my little ones. Maybe it's because my folks only had two kids. Or because my sister and I were well behaved. Or because we live in a generation in which childless vacations are more readily accepted, more common.

Whatever the reason, the guilt stayed in my mind. I didn't act on it.

NOT SO my wife. She suffered. For two weeks she slaved getting the house, and Abra, ready for those two days. She had to feel that she was not being a neglectful mother.

Arrangements had to be made, rides organized, food cooked, clothes set out, notes written. Nothing was left to chance. Every detail was taken care of. The house was so clean I hated to leave.

The kids, for their part, could not have cared less. They saw it as an opportunity to weasel a few more scraps of junk food out of our friend. To watch more television. To stay up later.

Which added to the guilt. Why were they accepting our absence so readily? What were we doing wrong? Where had we failed?

The two days passed in uneventful bliss. Except for one event that will be a constant reminder of the time we abandoned home.

Our firstborn — the boy over whom we *kvelled* when he sneezed his first sneeze, scratched his first itch, took his first step — lost his first tooth. And we missed it.

The tooth fairy, instead of slipping a shekel underneath his pillow, was self-indulgently sipping a daquiri around a swimming pool. O, wicked fate! Someone will surely be scarred by this for life. What's not clear is whether it will be him, or us.

GUARANTEED PLAY NON-SCIENTIFIC

Mivchan Americai!

by G. H. Freedman @ 95

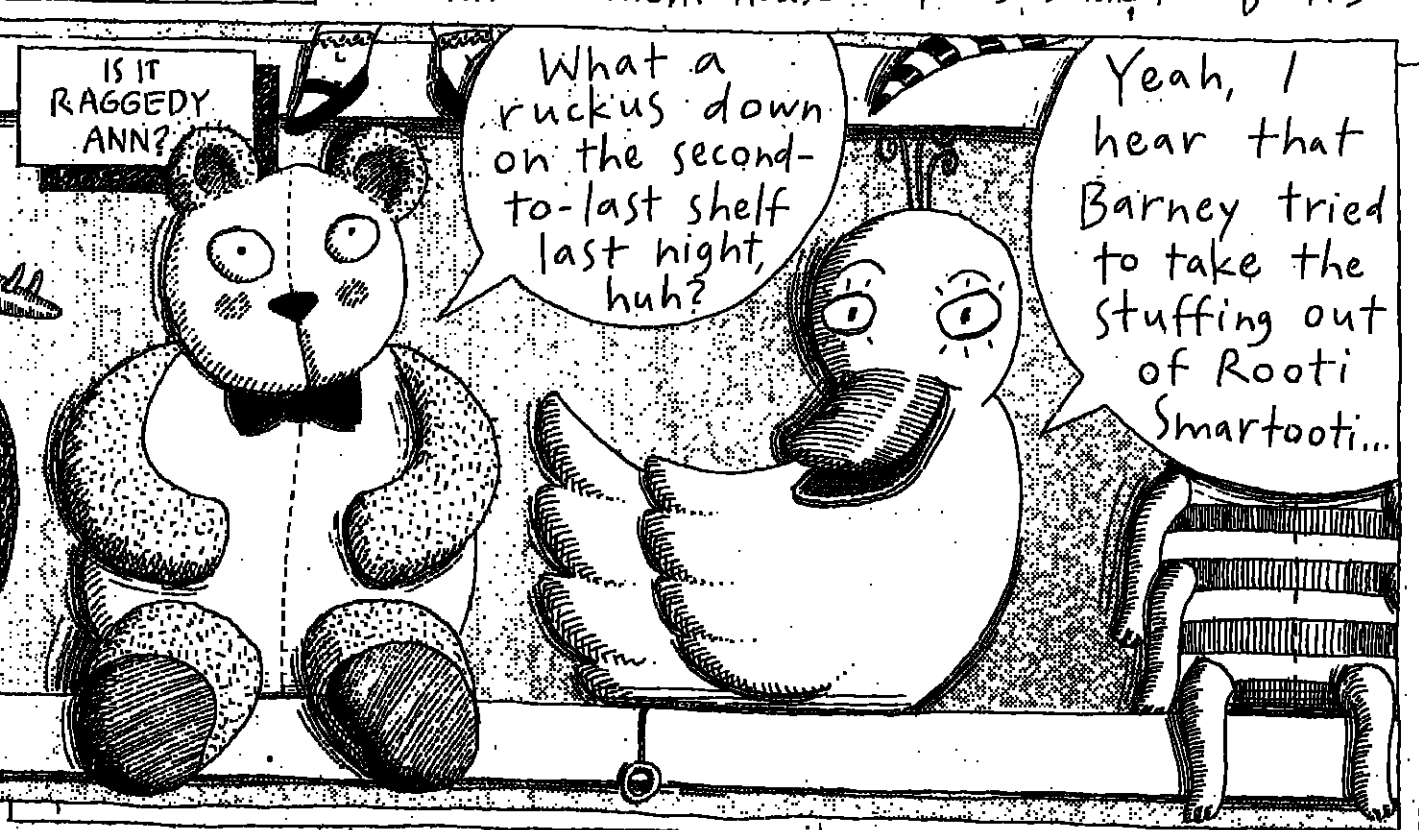
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE TERM: ROOTI SMARTOOTI? רותי סמרטוטי?

A. A rag doll like Raggedy Ann

B. The person who cleans the stairwell in your apartment house

C. The roadside stands that sell strawberries in the spring+summer

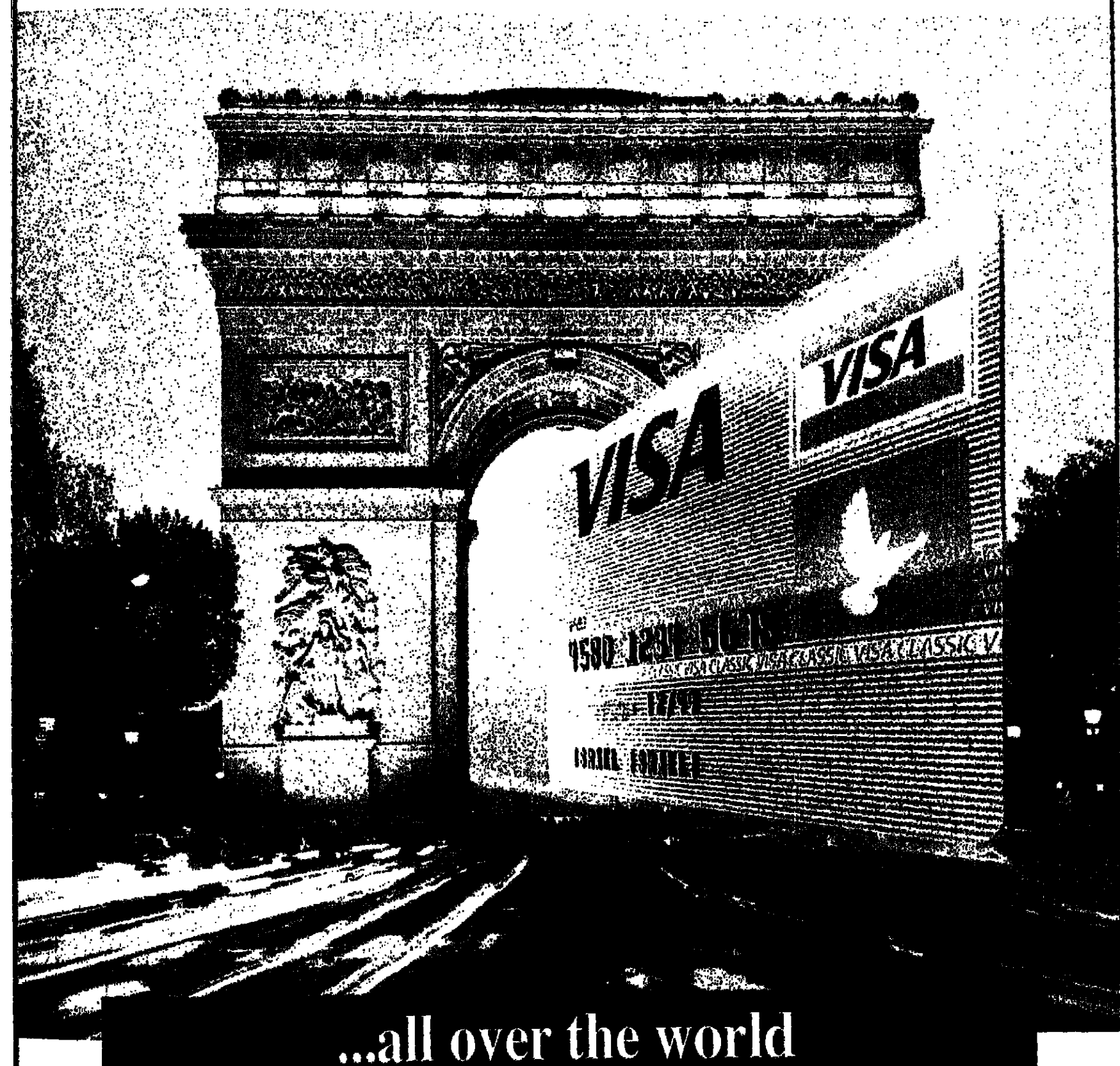
D. A person who sews patchwork quilts



Rooti Smartooti is A: a rag doll like Raggedy Ann. That's it, no nuances, requires no explanations, Raggedy Ann. Oh, alright, as in "Rooti Smartooti just survived another trip through the washer and dryer — just in time, thank goodness for Omer's bedtime..."

4 THE JERUSALEM POST MAGAZINE

VISA - Your passport to travel and entertainment



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VISA. ALL YOU NEED.

Finding her lost family is the jewelry in Nadine's crown

By Sue Fishkoff

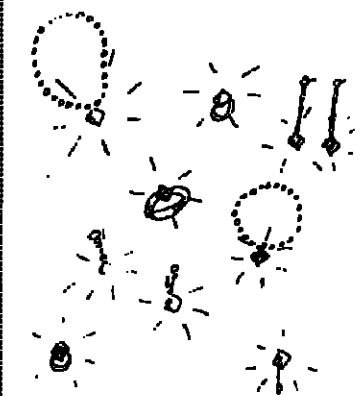
Nadine Avrahami doesn't like to wear jewelry. That might not be surprising, unless you happen to know that Avrahami is the manager of a jewelry factory that last year added more than \$1 million to the coffers of Kibbutz Revadim.

Avrahami, 50, is a large, strong-looking woman who speaks her mind plainly. A schoolteacher by profession, with two children aged 16 and 18, she served as the kibbutz general manager before being brought in four years ago to rescue Revadim's faltering jewelry factory.

In 1983, two Revadim girls fresh out of the army started making jewelry as a hobby. They used synthetic stones made of petroleum, left over from a failed kibbutz industry from the 1970s, and set them in intricate silver settings. When the leftover stones ran out, the young designers began using antique glass fragments dating back to the Roman empire, which they bought from local merchants who obtained them from archeological digs.

The business remained a small

cottage industry, never involving more than six or seven kibbutz members, who produced a limited quantity of silver jewelry strictly for the local market. Every year, the kibbutz management debated



whether or not to close it down.

In 1989, the kibbutz opened a wedding-ring factory. This business did quite well right from the start, fast eclipsing the more esoteric Roman glass creations in terms of financial returns.

In January 1991, the kibbutz asked Avrahami to manage both factories. "I quickly realized the jewelry had great potential," she says. Together with marketing

manager Hanna Loubaton, Avrahami first merged the two factories into "Saphirim Rahav," and then embarked on an aggressive export campaign that shot the business's revenues sky-high.

From a business that brought in barely \$150,000 five years ago, she and Loubaton created a million-dollar operation that exports jewelry to Europe, North and South America and the Far East.

For our interview, however, Avrahami sports a pair of silver earrings, in which ancient Jewish coins have been set, and a large bracelet of Roman glass. The blue and yellow colors sparkle brilliantly in the silver of antique glass, which is so delicate to be almost transparent.

THE TECHNIQUE of blowing glass was first invented in the eastern Mediterranean in the first century CE, replacing the older, more cumbersome methods of cutting and building glass vessels by hand. Eretz Yisrael was a center of glass-blowing in Roman, and later Byzantine, times, and much of the glass used in Revadim's jewelry comes from newly unearthed archeological sites in Israel, Syria and Jordan.

The blown glass was originally transparent, and of a blue or greenish hue. The delicate glass fragments developed a rich, multicolored patina - the result of 2,000 years of oxidation and natural polishing by salts and other chemicals in the earth.

Today, 25 kibbutz members and seven hired workers are employed at Saphirim Rahav. Two women artists create the designs for Revadim's jewelry, basing many of their designs on artifacts unearthed from Ekron. This ruined Philistine city dating back to 3400 BCE is located within Revadim's boundaries.

Most of Revadim's original line is Byzantine in style, with fantastic whorls and sharply edged motifs. The newest line, unveiled this season, is based on more simple, geometric Roman designs, which Avrahami believes will be more popular with European clients.

AVRAHAMI IS proud of the fact that Revadim's jewelry factory is run by women. "I'm a feminist, but not as great a feminist as my



Nadine Avrahami recognized the potential of antique jewelry.

mother, who was a feminist before the word existed," she says. Avrahami's mother fought in the French Resistance during the World War II, and was awarded France's highest medal of honor for her bravery. During the war, she met Nadine's father, a fellow underground fighter, and conceived her daughter. The lovers never married, as Nadine's father, an Italian Catholic, was already married to a Polish Jew.

After the war, the three-year-old girl and her mother emigrated to Israel. Nadine grew up in Ramat Gan, before going to Kibbutz Revadim with a Nahal group in 1963.

"All those years, my mother showed me my father's picture and told me he died in the war," Avrahami recalls. "I always suspected something was being kept from me, but it was taboo to ask too many questions."

Her mother died in 1983. Several years ago, Avrahami received a letter from one of her mother's

wartime comrades, containing her father's 1986 obituary. At last, Avrahami knew his name and his history: He was a leader of the Italian Communist Party, and had a son with his legal wife.

Five years ago, Avrahami met her half-brother in the Bologna train station. They wept as they spoke in halting French, their only shared language, and filled in the details of their parents' lives. Next week, Avrahami is returning to Bologna with her two teenagers to introduce them to their half-cousins.

"I went looking for my father and found a brother instead," she says.

To this day, Avrahami doesn't know why her mother never married. "She told a boyfriend who returned from Siberia after the war that she didn't want to saddle him with someone else's child, but other friends told me that she simply loved my father too much to marry anyone else," Avrahami muses. "She took her secret with her to the grave."

WHO ELSE IS THERE?

"It started against West Bank Arabs, then Israeli Arabs, then Sephardi criminals, then Sephardi Jews who weren't criminals. Now it has reached Ashkenazim."

Hebrew University criminologist Menahem Amir, exploring the increase in police brutality.

ENDNOTES

Cost of a taxi license
Ministry of Transport tender
- NIS 65,752
Free market resale price
- \$80,000

July 19, 1995
Taxi fares rose by 6.25%

Starting fare on the meter
as of July 19
NIS 5.60 instead of NIS 5.30

Fares on inter-urban rides
To be determined by the price set
on the taxi meter or from
an authorized list published
by the Transport Ministry

Compiled by Kelly Hartog

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NEW TITLES

MANUEL DE FALLA
Nights in the Gardens of Spain, Master Peter's Puppet Show, When the Fire Burns Alicia de Larocha, Justino Diaz, Joan Cabero, Xavier Cabero, Teresa Berganza, Narciso Yepes and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, directed by Charles Dulot. 138 min. Decca. JP Price NIS 89

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Kathleen Battle, Luciano Pavarotti, Juan Pons, Enzo Dara. Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Chorus and Ballet conducted by James Levine. 133 min. Deutsche Grammophon. JP Price NIS 99

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Narrated by Sling. Featuring the glittering image puppets. Chamber Orchestra of Europe conducted by Claudio Abbado. Directed by Christopher Swann, Roger Law and Steve Bendelack. 65 min. Deutsche Grammophon. JP Price NIS 89

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Larissa Lezhnina, Farukh Ruzaimov, Yulia Mikhelina and Vadim Gulyayev. Kirov Ballet of St. Petersburg, conducted by Viktor Fedotov. 129 min. Philips. JP Price NIS 99

AIDA
Arlene Millo, Placido Domingo, Dolora Zajack, Sherrill Milnes. The Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Chorus, conducted by James Levine. 168 min. Deutsche Grammophon. JP Price NIS 99

CARMEN
Agnes Balta, Jose Carreras, Leona Mitchell. The Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by James Levine. 172 min. Deutsche Grammophon. JP Price NIS 99

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Rudolf Nureyev, Margot Fonteyn, Vienna State Opera and Ballet, Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Conducted by John Lanchbery. 108 min. Philips.

CECILIA BARTOLI - A Portrait
Arias by Mozart, Rossini, Vivaldi, Pergolesi - by the rising international star, winner of many prestigious contests, with Gyorgy Fischer, piano. 81 min. Decca. JP Price NIS 89

IL TROVATORE
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Philippe Huttenlocher, Diethelm Turben, Monteverdi Ensemble of the Zurich Opera House. Conducted by Nicolaus Harnoncourt, directed and designed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. 101 min. Decca. JP Price NIS 89

THE NUTCRACKER
The world's most beloved ballet for children of all ages. With Larissa Lezhnina, Victor Beranov, Kirov Ballet and Orchestra. Conducted by Victor Fedotov, filmed at the Mariinsky (Kirov) Theatre. 125 min. Philips. JP Price NIS 99

FLYING DUTCHMAN
Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra. Conducted by Wolfgang Neuner. 186 min. Philips. JP Price NIS 99

LA TRAVIATA
Teresa Stratas, Placido Domingo, Cornell MacNeil, Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Ekaterina Maximova and Vladimir Vassiliev of the Bolshoi Theatre - in a lavish production by Franco Zeffirelli. Conducted by James Levine. 105 min. Deutsche Grammophon. JP Price NIS 89

LOHENGGRIN (two video-cassettes)
Siegfried Vogel, Peter Hofmann, Karen Armstrong, with the Chorus and Orchestra of the Bayreuth Festival, in one of the most romantic operas by Wagner. Conducted by Norbert Nelson. 200 min. Philips. JP Price NIS 179 (2 cassettes)

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VERDI'S KISS
Arias by Verdi, Rossini, Puccini, conducted by James Levine. 105 min. Deutsche Grammophon. JP Price NIS 89

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TOSCA
Rainer Kappelwanska, Placido Domingo, Sherrill Milnes. Conductor Bruno Bartoletti. 118 min. Decca. JP Price NIS 89

RIGOLETTO
Ingvar Wikvall, Edita Gruberova, Luciano Pavarotti, with Vienna State Opera and Orchestra. Conducted by Riccardo Chailly. 118 min. Decca. JP Price NIS 89

MARRIAGE OF FIGARO
Dieter Fischer-Dieskau, Mirella Freni, Kiri Te Kanawa, Karl Bohm conducts the Vienna Philharmonic. 181 min. Decca. JP Price NIS 99

CARRERAS, DOMINGO PAVAROTTI with MEHTA
In concert in Rome, 7 July 1990. Zubin Mehta conducts Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Orchestra del Teatro dell'Opera di Roma. 88 min. Decca. JP Price NIS 89

SCENE AND HEARD

Dennis Ross had a case, but found himself with no clothes

By Allison Kaplan Sommer

Sensational business travelers generally honor one cardinal rule: always take along a carry-on bag filled with everything you need in case of emergency. After all, anything can happen to those suitcases you check in with the airline: they can be lost, stolen, sent to Moscow by mistake.

Sometimes that lesson has to be learned the hard way. And recently, the point was proved that no one, not even senior US State Department officials, are too important to be exempt. Just ask Dennis Ross, the chief of the US peace brigade, who last week found himself not dressed up with somewhere really important to go.

Ross, and the rest of his team of negotiators, had shuttled in from Washington last Monday for a meeting with Prime Minister Rabin, when they found themselves among the victims of the work slowdown by disgruntled workers at Ben-Gurion Airport, who refused to unload passenger luggage with their usual cheerful efficiency. So, while the peace team headed toward Jerusalem, its suitcases did not. The Americans found themselves due for their meeting clad in sloppy, inappropriate attire, as if those dapper Israeli officials would have noticed.

LUCKILY FOR the Americans, the staff of the Larommo Hotel, where they were staying, came to their rescue, taking up clothing donations on their behalf. And so,

it came to pass that Ross met with Rabin in an eclectic ensemble: on the bottom half, his own faded jeans and sneakers; on top, the hotel deputy general manager's jacket, and the hotel comptroller's silk tie. The crowning glory, however, was Ross's white shirt, lifted from the storeroom where



the waiter's uniforms were kept. Larommo general manager Omri Krongold said Ross himself had been perfectly happy to meet Rabin in the casual garb he was wearing. Obviously, he had observed local dress codes closely enough to know that his Israeli counterparts wouldn't even have noticed. It was his aides who insisted on the quick wardrobe assembly. Apparently, Ross drew the line at wearing waiter's pants, preferring the casually elegant look of his jeans.

The shirt, he reported, was returned to the hotel's stash of waiter's costumes. So next time you're being served at the Larommo, remember that the waiter's shirt could have made history.

MEMBERS ONLY

Snobbery has come out of the closet and is no longer the preserve of the elite.

By Netty C. Gross

On the periphery of an emerald-green Kfar Shmaryahu lawn and parallel to an oval swimming pool, a short, bald man is giving a lecture in Hebrew on the challenge of laying a clay tennis court on the topsoil of what was once a potato field. Listening to him, as waiters circulate with trays filled with miniature quiches, are clusters of his friends — mostly high-powered lawyers and businessmen — their wives and an African ambassador.

The purpose of the party? The host is celebrating a financial coup — the establishment of an overseas investment group intent on sinking mega-millions into choice Israeli high-tech firms. In the meantime a whole universe of polished and expensive footwear — brown loafers, ornate wing tips, leather flats, boots, slippers — is sinking into the mud.

"I had to fly this consultant from Wimbledon," the host drones on. The faces of his guests are bright with a mixture of pain and expectation characteristic of such situations.

"These potatoes kept popping out of the ground and they kept breaking up the court. Ruti was going nuts. Finally George Soros suggested calling Wimbledon."

At the mention of the name Soros, the international financier who, in world financial markets, has attained the authority of a god, the eyes of the guests narrow in talmudic concentration. Does this mean that Soros is involved in his fund? The air thickens with a mix of anxiety and anticipation typical of the first hour of a high-school dance.

This is a party like many parties in Kfar Shmaryahu where starry business deals and vivid pleasure principles are fused. The

guests, like relatives suffering the table talk of a very wealthy and chatty relative, dig their heels in the ground. They are acutely aware of the potential deal to be cut, the magnitude of which will redeem the humiliation of listening to the host.

A thin blonde woman then blurts out in whiny high-pitched Hebrew, "It's exactly what I had when I dug my pool in Caesarea."

Her comment is met with stares and a rolling of the eyes; she is, after all, a very silly woman. Is she not aware that, by comparing her pedestrian pool ordeal with that of the host's complicated clay tennis court, she is putting herself on par with him, with someone who chats with George Soros?

"What are you talking about, Orly?" snarls her husband loudly. "Our pool was nothing compared to his tennis court."

An American immigrant appears at a Jerusalem synagogue favored by Orthodox couples, many of whom are academicians. The occasion is her first foray into the unknowable local Shabbat morning synagogue scene. To signal her arrival, she has selected a low-key navy-blue Ralph Lauren linen dress with calibrated nautical straw fedora, pumps and a truly modest amount of Donna Karan costume jewelry.

By contrast, the congregants exude the "shlump" chic typical of a certain class of haute Jerusalemites. They resemble modern-day Calvinists who have given up the evils of the flesh for a pure diet of ideas. The women tend to dress in a sartorial style which might be pegged as early Stalinist — a no-nonsense grab bag of polyester skirts and blouses, scarves, hats and sensible shoes.

This is not to say there are no snobs, it's just that the currency is not in designer clothes. The otherness of the situation strikes the American immigrant as remarkable, even alien.

"Who are you?" asks an Israeli woman finally.

The immigrant mentions her name, adding with goofy benevolence, "And who are you?"

"Me?" sniffs the Israeli woman. Her tongue lingers on the rolling r's as she says, "I am *dar shmita ba'aretz* [an eighth-generation Israeli]."

Vera Weizmann, wife of the country's first president, was quite possibly Israel's first conspicuous snob.

In the 1940s she set the standard for flaunting one's superiority by cloistering herself in her regal Rehovot villa with her pet schnauzer. In truth, the first lady, who wouldn't deign to speak Hebrew and invoked a great deal of criticism for her

haute British behavior, may have been not so much a snob but merely someone ahead of her time.

There have always been two distinct types of snobs in Israel: one whose condescension toward others came from financial superiority, and one who had pretensions to being from a better class. Vera Weizmann, like many social predators in today's high society, epitomized both sorts. Her elitist airs sprang from a preoccupation with both money and class and an awareness of the social power created in the fusion of both elements.

"The cream stays on top," shrugs one arch Tel Aviv socialite when asked her opinion on just who is considered to be high society today.

Snobbery in this country is no longer the patrimony of a handful of ancient-regime figures. Far from it. It's long been democratized.

"If you're a nobody from let's say, Peoria, Illinois, and you want to break into Israeli high society, you can," according to veteran Tel Aviv publicist Bella Diamond (who today handles the public relations for a major cosmetics firm). "It's not a closed type of thing as it might be in Paris where you have to be the daughter of some marquis."

In Israel, all you need is a lot of money; a nice villa in one of the big three cities — Jerusalem, Tel Aviv or Haifa — and one, or better even two, friends who are... the *movilim* [movers and shakers] of Israeli society; [and] someone who is willing to shlep you along to parties until people notice how charming and flush with money you are and then start inviting you all on your own. Of course this means that you can't have the personality of a sack of potatoes."

Who could be considered to be an adequate *movilim*?

"Well if it's someone like [jewelry designer and socialite] Ilana Gur, who runs a sort of French salon and has homes all over the world, that could be an excellent start," says Diamond.

Or you could hire someone like Roni Rahav, 32, the country's top publicist (Lea

Rabin is a client) to sort things out. But he might not accept you because, by all accounts, he knows a zillion people who have a million dollars.

Or there is the intravenous approach. According to a Jerusalem socialite, "you can drop a \$20,000 gift at the Israel Museum acquisitions department for openers and then see how the invitations roll in. I think a call from [museum director] Martin Weyl to come over for drinks with him and Tami, his wife, might follow. It's certainly possible. Also the Bible Lands Museum which is newer and has less cachet, is an excellent place to drop cash in exchange for some action."

Hanging out at chichi restaurants like the Olympia in Tel Aviv where Lea Rabin — in the manner of New York socialites at Madison Avenue's Le Cirque — had her set table (until a recent tiff with the owners) is no guarantee of anything. With the proliferation of utterly swanky restaurants, things have changed drastically since the famous cafeteria underneath the National Library (which closed 10 years ago) was a watering hole for upwardly mobile types like the current mayors of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Ehud Olmert and Ronni Milo, arms dealer David Kolitz, socialite Ronit Jaglom, philosopher Avi Ravitzky and hundreds of others who are today at the vortex of the ever-churning social scene.

What if you have no money but have keen social aspirations, a reasonable wardrobe and a peppy, well-spoken mien? Greer Fay Cashman, who writes the "Grapevine" column for *The Jerusalem Post*, says you might be able to elbow your way into society by "doing the most hated job of all in society — selling tickets to an annual benefit."

For example, Cashman says a thoughtful phone call to a friendly Jerusalem socialite like Devora Rejwan with an offer to volunteer selling tickets for her favorite cause, LIBI (the Fund for Strengthening Israel's Defense) might do the trick.

For postwar immigrants and native Israelis who soaked up the egalitarian canon of Zionism, being a snob requires the unthinkable — a certain emotional independence from the *hevre* (the crowd) and an inner freedom to shamelessly run ahead of the pack. It requires brandishing status symbols while the kids with whom you grew up, and served in the army, proceed at their own fixed imperturbable rate.

Local sociologists tie the legitimization of snobbery to the development of the nouveau riche class which sprung up after the

Likud came to power in 1977. This political transformation fed a pent-up Israeli appetite for capitalism as well as the stomach for some serious social climbing.

According to Dr. Oz Almog, a cultural sociologist who has studied the "new sabra," and who is currently writing a book on the changes reflected in society via a study of emergent architecture: "The development of snobbery is a very important sociological point. The cracks in the Israeli class system which sought for so long to preach the message of oneness, are clearly visible. We are increasingly searching for distinctions from one another; for reasons to differentiate ourselves from our neighbors."

"We started out," he notes, "as a fervent socialist society, to the extent that even those who had money and symbols of status were careful not to flaunt them. The official word was to downplay, not accentuate, class differences."

"The orientation was anti-decadent, a veneration — as far as the sabra went — of simplicity, as though that reflected a great truth, a greater honesty. In the 1930s, the whole world was doing the fox trot. Women here didn't wear lipstick."

Although Almog suggests that there might actually be something inherently Jewish in all this modesty, ultimately Israelis have a "suffering culture" for reasons of their own.

"Judaism is not a culture of icons as Christianity is, rather it's a culture of spirituality. Even the archetype Jewish rich man of prewar Europe was not the sort who would flaunt wealth excessively."

But above all, it's been the years and years of wars which have contributed a sense of both solidarity and guilt to the Israeli psyche; the notion that it's not right to sit in your Jacuzzi while your friend or neighbor is boiling in Gaza on reserve duty, or worse — is wounded or dead; that the way to advertise wealth or abundance is to share, to donate, to be of help in some way."

Almog believes that emergent snobbery has its roots in two phenomena. "Firstly, we have become a moneyed society with more than one generation of accumulated wealth in many cases. This means that a lot of people have had money for years and there's less of a need to be self-conscious about it. You can allow yourself to be more extroverted with your status symbols."

"Second, there is a legitimization of individualism which didn't exist in Israel 20 years ago, before the Likud came to power. Egocentrism has come out of the closet, so to speak, and thus the Israeli says to himself, 'Not only am I allowed to show off, I must.'"

"Today, collective goals such as nationalism and patriotism are out. Personal achievement is in. And there's practically a Calvinist twist to it. If I've made it, says the Israeli to himself, then I've really and truly fulfilled my personal goals and satisfied the reason God put me on the planet."

Today the trickle of pre-state snobs has turned into a jam-packed superhigh-

ARE THEY SNOBS, OR JUST RICH?

Western immigrants cite distaste for the snobbery in their native Jewish communities as a reason for moving here. Although many arrive like shipwrecked Huguenots in search of refuge from the tyranny of snobbery, they aren't willing to forgo the gilded instruments of torture: luxurious homes, expensive cars and housekeepers from the Philippines and Guatemala.

"Some of my religious clients," says a Jerusalem architect on the condition of anonymity, "have put mikves in their own homes like the Jewish aristocracy did during the time of the Second Temple. I think this is definitely tied in with some sort of ultimate Jewish afterlife fantasy."

"Most of my clients [who] have wealthy parents or simply assets abroad come here with lists: they want Villeroy-Bosch toilets, Poggenpohl kitchens, Sub-zero refrigerators."

But does this constitute snobbery? Dr. Randy Kaufman, a social psychologist who has studied Western immigrant groups in Israel, says no. "So what if Western immigrants need, for whatever reason, to maintain a level of familiarity, even excessive, material comfort? It's what's central to maintaining their identity and it's what they are used to. This has nothing to do with snobbery."

Kaufman argues that "there's a beautiful story here. Western immigrants come here with profound idealistic values and as such they are open to all types of Israelis. From the social point of view, they are moving to Israel of 1950 and they relish the notion of social egalitarianism. Right off the airplane, they'll strike up friendships with taxi drivers, with hotel bellboys."

"I remember," observes Allison Levin, a psychiatric social worker and Orthodox Jew from Los Angeles, "a math professor moved into a very expensive home in a neighborhood [here] where a modest place could go for \$500,000. At synagogue, instead of praying, people were calculating how might he afford it — being a professor."

"The obsession with money and status," she says, "was a big turn-off for me in the U.S. I have no idea what goes on in Tel Aviv, but Jerusalem is, I think, one of the few Jewish cities on

earth where scholarship is still venerated, still respected as a premium human value. All those Jerusalem professors with funny little hats really do set the tone here."

Has she tried to break into Israeli society? "No," says Levin. "I wouldn't know an Israeli society figure or a socialite if I crashed into her on the street. I don't know what or who to break into. I've seen Israeli women with dark sunglasses and red lipstick driving Volvos but I have no idea who they are."

Kaufman believes the Western immigrant's idyllic view begins to ebb "after he's realized what a tight-knit society Israel is and how deadly marginality can be. But after he's built his castle and gotten a job, most Western olim remain contentedly in their social group unless they have a particular social goal in mind. I don't think they plot ways to get invited to Dudu Topaz's party for Gila Almagor or that sort of thing."

One prominent *haredi* rabbi said there is no snobbery in *haredi* circles for a simple reason: *haredim* in Jerusalem don't have living rooms.

"A large *haredi* family needs a dining room with a big table because that is where they eat, where they study Torah. Nothing good happens in a modern living room. People sit on couches opposite each other with empty faces and gossip; brag and as their eyes wander, become envious. *Haredim* don't socialize in the conventional Western sense by inviting other couples; with a Scotch in one hand and a cigarette in another. This certainly limits opportunities for social snobbery."

And in Bnei Brak?

"There might be more money in Bnei Brak and even in sections of Jerusalem. The preoccupation with money and its esteem as a value has, unfortunately, infiltrated many *haredi* circles. I think this is imported from America, from Antwerp and other places where there is a great deal of money and competition. I heard a couple of *haredim* from Brooklyn bragging to each other about how many human-hair wigs each of their wives owns and it was horrifying to me. A scandal!"

— N.C.G.

way of Israeli elitists. When *Yerushalayim* society columnist and businesswoman Michal Isaacs ticks off a breakdown of high-society groups in Jerusalem, it sounds a bit like the repetitive child's game "One-potato, two-potato." But undoubtedly when standing all together, these people would be a masterpiece, the Sistine Chapel of our social set.

"There's old money and new money," begins Isaacs. "Old academe and new academe; government; the old Sephardi scene and the new people scene; the medical scene; the military scene; the media scene. In Tel Aviv, you have to factor in the industrial scene; the banking and finance scene; the diplomatic corps scene; the arts and literary scene; the model and starlet and singer scene; the museum scene..."

According to Isaacs, at any decent private party held in either Jerusalem or Tel Aviv, the social cocktail must include at least five members of any of the above mentioned

groups. Is there a religious scene? "Having [Ashkenazi Chief] Rabbi Lau show up at a party never hurts," she observes.

Bella Diamond is insistent that she would never invite a religious figure of any sort to any social event in Tel Aviv. "The models are half naked; the food is *treif*. No way. It can only mean problems. Religious types don't belong there."

Besides private parties, there are a number of amount of functions to attend. Innumerable charity events, often in the format of a fashion show, swamp Israeli five-star hotels each week. These occasions vie for the presence of the rich, the famous and the politically, artistically and socially connected.

Whatever the country's historic psycho-socialist limitations, Israelis are fully up to appreciating all the structural rules and complexities of snobbery, and all the intricacies of social wining and dining it involves.

The playing field is still relatively new and uncertain. Real ties to the country's socialist and Zionist roots, and the army melting pot experience, inhibit the degree

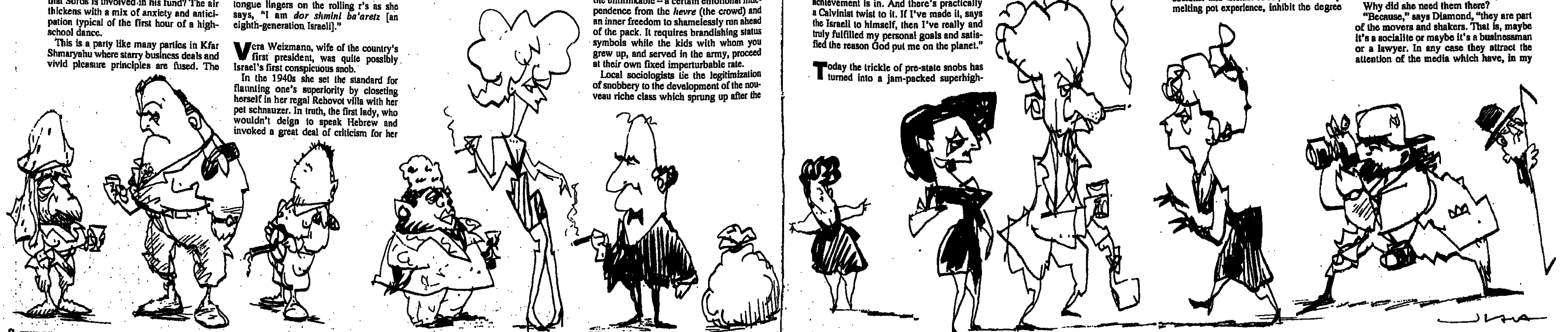
of social rootlessness which characterizes the New York, London or Paris society scenes. Yet Israelis have developed major snob expertise of their own.

It has its own *heimliche* aspects. The way the society columnists and gossip writers describe it, navigating the arctic waters of the local high society requires a knowledge of *Bonfire of the Vanities*.

"On July 23, Nagwa and Mohammed Bassiouny [the Egyptian ambassador and his wife] are having their annual Egyptian Independence Day party," says Diamond. "Nagwa is a major society figure in Israel on everybody's guest list. About 1,000 invitations are sent out to the who's who of Israeli society."

"Honestly," she says with hushed concern, "I know people who didn't get an invitation and frankly, they called me up — they weren't ashamed — and said, 'Help me get an invitation to Bassiouny's party. Please, I can't bear it.' And I do. Why? Because maybe last month when I launched a new perfume at the Hilton or somewhere I invited them and they came."

Why did she need them there? "Because," says Diamond, "they are part of the movers and shakers. That is, maybe it's a socialite or maybe it's a businessman or a lawyer. In any case they attract the attention of the media which have, in my



A STATUS SYMBOL CALLED 'YICHUS'

Although austere cultural habits may inhibit a real outbreak of snobbery in hardi circles, elitism exists, cloaked in a concept known as *yichus*, a word which has come to denote one's family pedigree. The cream stays on top in hardi circles too.

For example several months ago, more than 4,000 festively dressed hardi women flooded the mammoth celebration marking the circumcision of the first grandson of the Belz Rebbe, Aaron Rokeach. Of these, about 30 were given seats of honor on the dais. These women constituted the elite of Belz society. They were either relatives of the baby's parents, wives of prominent Belz rabbis and functionaries, headmistresses of various Belz schools, or all three.

"In the hassidic courts," says Dr. Elisheva Sofer, an anthropologist who has studied hardi women, "there is a real conflict over snobbery. First there are many admonitions against elitism, snobbery (and) vanity in Jewish texts. The sage Hillel, we are told, was a shoemaker, for example. Second, the hassidic movements themselves are populist in origin and to retain their power must remain in close communion with the masses."

"But," says Sofer, "in hardi circles 'continuity' is the magic word and it's considered part of a parent's duty to ensure that the children have married well, that is, married someone with *yichus*."

What exactly constitutes *yichus*? "In theory, someone with *yichus* is from a family of scholars and pious men and women. The old hassidic formula of marrying off the wealthy man's daughter to the brilliant Torah scholar is still a primary one. Needless to say, proximity to the rebbe himself is definitely a value."

Jessica Levitt, a Hebrew University student from Boston, says

that after she became strictly observant, she was warned by "someone who had gone a similar route, that, with the exception of the Lubavitch, hardim as such would never accept me into their families because I have zero *yichus*. My father was Jewishly ignorant; my mother had never gone to the mikve, which meant that I wasn't conceived in purity and wasn't a 'kosher' child."

Levitt says that a hardi matchmaker she consulted came up with three potential suitors: "a cripple, a widower with nine children, and a German convert to Judaism whose father was a member of the SS."

According to Rabbi Israel Eichler, spokesman for the Belz rebbe and a popular defender of the hardi life-style, snobbery per se is deeply frowned upon in hardi circles. "It's a subject of derision," he says. "In the secular world, the value system is such that the more a man knows in any given field, the more elevated he is by his peers and by society in general."

"In religious circles it's exactly the opposite. The more learned a man may be in Torah knowledge, the more is his appreciation of modesty and humility. [The hardi] Rabbi Eliezer, walks in line at the grocery... behind children who come to buy candy."

Eichler says *yichus* is a very old concept in Jewish tradition which has nothing to do with snobbery. Abraham, says Eichler, sent the servant Eliezer to check out Rebecca's suitability for his son, Isaac.

"It comes from a legitimate responsibility to make sure one's child marries a person educated in the ways of the Torah. That's not to say that the culture of money-as-the-most-important value hasn't seeped into the hardi world. It has, and that's regrettable."

-N.C.G.

opinion, played a large role in all of this. So why wouldn't they have received an invitation to Bassouny's party? Put it this way: They should have been invited."

Diamond takes the position that, although she's acting out of self-interest, she may also be performing a service for the temporarily nouveau-out socialites. Maybe they're not quite so "hot" anymore?

She treats the subject so solemnly that she nearly exposes its absurdity. "For some people, when the invitations stop coming, it's Death Valley because they are the types who have to know that they are at the top. That's just the way God made them. They need to believe they are part of high society. It's part of the way they define themselves. And why wouldn't I help them if I could?"

But Diamond also observes that "Israelis are notorious snobs even though there's a real taboo in admitting it to the *hevre*. And this is because there is total hypocrisy on the issue of class differences."

"In France, for example, a top military guy will never sit next to his army driver, who most probably will be a guy from a lower class or maybe even originally from Spain or Portugal. In Israel, the opposite is the case."

"In France, a maid will address her employer with 'madame,' always. In Israel, a maid will walk in and say, 'Hey, ahlan... how are you?' And you will invite her to family events. But here the line is drawn: never to social events."

Michal Isaac suggests that it's cliquishness rather than snobishness which drives the Israeli social climber to constantly redefine his/her worth by reappearing at chic parties and important social events.

"People want to be part of what they consider 'high society.' They want to see and be seen in the company of those at the top of the social pecking order until it's assumed by members of the press and the public in general that they are part of the social scene."

And if you are not invited?

"You'll be insulted," says Isaac. "And how. I would say 90 percent of the society personalities who appear in my column do so at their own initiative. That is, they will notify me of their whereabouts because their name in my column keeps them socially afloat."

Jerusalem publicist Sarah Davidovitch, known as Sarah, is a society chronicler on a par with New York's Cindy Adams or Suzy Knickerbocker. The volatile and merry Davidovitch describes a harrowing little high society whose success

is based on the miraculous balance of rock-solid Jewish principles (which have traditionally produced a ton of brilliant professors, lawyers and doctors) and the helplessly gushing talent Israelis have for making money.

"The doctors you must have at your party," she announces, "can either be Professors [Arie] Durst or Dani Rachmielevitch or [Joseph] Shenker or Dani Weinstein." Curiously, Durst, Shenker and Weinstein are all gynecologists.

"In Jerusalem," she says, "it's crucial to have at least one of them because everyone respects them enormously. And they are big draws."

"People from the business world who are essential are people in finance, like Mati Davidovitch [her husband], Moshe Dovrat, and then some of the *samech-tets*. (These Hebrew initials, which stand for *sephardi talor* - of pure Sephardi origin - are used by the city's Sephardi grandees.)"

"There's [bakery mogul] Danny Angel, and the oil guy - Joe Elmaleh, who bought the Nargileh restaurants. And then there are the building contractors, the brothers Yona for example. Mordecai and Yehuda are always great to have. Everyone contributes to the atmosphere."

Is there one single person who can turn heads, who can catapult a party from the banal to snob stratosphere?

"Just the prime minister," harumphs Sarah, "and his wife. Not or his wife, I stress. That's it. If you have a party and Yitzhak Rabin walks in, it's an instant 'in.' It catapults the party. It's a firecracker. You've arrived. You're made."



for some blurb in the newspaper.

The phenomenon of "power couples" is well known in Jerusalem. An invitation from attorneys Tami and Yehuda Raveh can be critical to a social climber or arriviste. (She's the daughter of Eichmann prosecutor Gideon Hausner and a former head of the powerful office which handles zoning issues in the Jerusalem municipality; he's got a substantial Jerusalem law practice and is a major Israel Museum big wheel.)

"Before you start pestering people for invitations," advises Isaac, "it's best to know what you are hoping to achieve. You have to ask yourself: With whom am I trying to network? Social, political or business types?"

Are there triple-header parties at which all three elements are present?

"Absolutely," says Davidovitch. "Take Zalman Shoval's party for [American Ambassador] Martin Indyk which was an important invitation in the social realm of things. [Shoval is married to a Wisnitsky heiress and was ambassador to Washington during the Shamir government.] I would say 10 percent of the guests were Shoval's inner circle of personal friends. And the rest were corporate and chamber of commerce types [such as] the chairman of the New Israeli Opera. There's a lot of overlapping. The common denominators are money and power."

Not all Israelis in the upper echelons can be spotted at starry society fundanos. Gortex head Yehudit Gottfried is reportedly very low-key and doesn't accept many invitations. WIZO head Raya Jaglom appears frequently and is considered by society writers to be something of a quasi-diplomat.

"Then you have the case of someone like Shulamit Shamir," says one of the columnists, "the wife of former prime minister Yitzhak Shamir, who dropped like a stone socially after her husband left office. Flop."

D. Oz Almog believes Israeli society is in a state of what sociologists refer to as anomie, a sort of social vacuum.

"We are developing a new ethos in this country. There's a large new middle class; there's a vigorous legitimization of consumerism. And yet there are still elements from our old structure which may indicate that much of the social snobbery we see in this country is artificial; the army, which throws men and women of every different social class together; our religion and our common Jewish identity which promotes classic themes like [the ethic attributed to Rabbi Akiva] 'love your neighbor as you love yourself.' We are still trying to preserve ourselves as a community and define ourselves less as a society."

"There are no real stars in this country," continues Almog, "even a media star like [TV anchorman] Haim Yavin, is accessible [and] can be seen at a local cafe."

"Nor is there a private school system in Israel like Eton in Britain. All these considerations, however, are riddled with cracks. In fact, Israeli parents are increasingly pushing for separate educational streams. People increasingly want to live in private, landscaped communities."

Although Almog believes that the "state of war we have lived in provided a sort of social glue," he says that "only time will tell to what extent that will dissipate. And... there is, perhaps for the first time in this country's history, a total breakdown in communication between the political, cultural and social elite, which is left-wing and upper class, and the right wing, which is far more populist and lower class."

Will the peace process affect the status of snobbery in Israel? Will Suha and Yasser Arafat soon be part of the social and politically correct cocktail circuit?

Bella Diamond sniffs, "Why not? I am totally apolitical and I would welcome any of them. I would love to have Hanan Ashrawi or the Arafats over to some social event. If they would come. Honestly, why not the Arafats? If they are good enough for Yitzhak Rabin, they're good enough for me. I would say to them, Shalom Aleichem."

I know Gush Dan like the palm of my hand," says Uri Bazaz, as we turn the corner of Ibn Gabirol Street last Friday night on our way toward the Tel Aviv Cinematheque. "There isn't an alleyway from Petah Tikva to Netanyu I don't know."

Bazaz, 55, is a burly guy with a smiling, open face. He is one of more than 500 drivers working for the Kastel taxi company, the largest cab operation in the country, which owns 280 cabs. Born in Iraq, he arrived here with his parents at the age of 10. He's been playing the streets of Tel Aviv for 25 years, and says he's seen everything the city has to offer.

Hanging one elbow casually out the window and barely tapping the steering wheel with his right forefinger, Bazaz nudges his white Opel confidently around a tight curve. It's 11 p.m., and the streets of central Tel Aviv are filled with the after-dinner crowd.

"After 25 years, I can drive on automatic," he says. Bazaz is a talkative guy who warms up easily to strangers, the kind of driver who has you spilling your life story minutes after you step into his cab.

"I love to laugh and joke with people," he says. "It makes the time pass more quickly. From my first day on the job, they told me it's not enough to be a good driver. You have to be a PR expert, sometimes even an actor. You have to be friendly with everyone."

"I don't fight with my passengers. No one leaves my cab unhappy." Bazaz usually doesn't work the Friday night shift. He prefers to spend it at home in Petah Tikva with his wife, playing cards with their friends.

But, he notes, on any given Friday night, more than half the drivers who work for Kastel are out on the streets. You make more money at night, he points out. The fares are 25 percent higher, and the lack of traffic means you can zip around faster between destinations. But it's hell on a man's family life, which is why night duty is fobbed off on the drivers with least seniority.

"These guys never see their wife and kids," he explains. "A guy gets home at 6 a.m. at the end of a 12-hour shift and crawls into bed as his wife is getting up to go to work. They're lucky if they have Shabbat together. At least my car belongs to me, and I work days, so I can see my family at night."

Bazaz's usual shift is 4 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday through Thursday, plus Saturday morning. He usually gives the cab to his 23-year-old son Saturday afternoons, so the young man can pick up some extra money. "Why should he have to work as a waiter, for tips, when I can help him out?" he explains.

Driving cabs has become much tougher these past two or three years, he says. "I never used to work Shabbat or holidays. Three years ago, we worked 10-hour shifts, five days a week. But the fares haven't gone up, the traffic is worse, and we have to work longer hours to make up the difference."

Bazaz notes that in the past few years bus fares in Tel Aviv have doubled. The cost-of-living index has increased, as have gas and maintenance costs. But even after this week's 6.25% rate hike, a cab ride still starts off at NIS 5.60. "Instead of striking for better pay, we just started adding on hours to our workweek. We're hanging on by our teeth."

Added to this are the increasing dangers of hold-ups, or worse. In the last 18 months, six drivers have been murdered behind the wheel.

At 11:30, Bazaz picks up his first fare near the Cinematheque - Liz and Peter Hodes, an elegantly dressed couple on holiday from their home in Cape Town, South



'After 25 years, I can drive on automatic.'

NIGHT RIDER

Uri Bazaz has been driving a Tel Aviv cab for 25 years. Last Friday night, one wide-awake reporter went along for the ride.

By Sue Fishkoff

Africa. They're on their way back to the Ramada Hotel after dinner with friends.

"Thank goodness we got this cab," Liz sighs. "We ordered it about an hour ago, but the dispatcher said there were no cars. Tourists should be told to order a cab as soon as they get to the restaurant."

Bazaz drops them off at the Ramada. A young American tourist leans into the cab window, a worried expression on her face. "Will you go by the corner of Yehuda Hamaccabi Street, and look for my friends?" she asks desperately. "They can't get a cab, and they've been stranded there for an hour and a half."

Can she call to see whether they're still waiting? Bazaz asks in halting English. No, she doesn't know exactly where they are. There might be three or four, or even five people, she's not sure. Couldn't Bazaz swing by and pick them up in two shifts? Bazaz declines politely and heads

back to Rehov Hayarkon.

"I feel bad for her, but I can't babysit her friends," he says. "People ask me to do that all the time, and when you get there, they've already found another cab. It's too risky."

The lack of cabs in the city is a major problem, he admits. "Passengers get real angry when they call and there are no cabs. But there are no cabs because the whole country is taking cabs now. The ministry has to give out more numbers."

According to the Transport Ministry, which issues the "green numbers" that cabbies must post on their hood, there are 10,000 licensed taxi drivers in the country. Nearly half work in the greater Tel Aviv area. But that's still not enough to serve the growing number of people who would rather call a cab than brave the congestion of the city streets themselves.

Bazaz notes that the ministry will be

issuing more than 1,000 new numbers by the end of the year, but, he says, it's a Catch-22 situation. More taxis mean more vehicles on the road, which will further snarl the traffic and make passengers even more angry, he says.

Taxi numbers cost a lot of money. According to the Tel Aviv branch of the National Taxi Drivers Association, the going price for a number is \$80,000. Numbers are often passed on from father to son, much like liquor licenses, and can either be used or rented out to other drivers.

Bazaz, like 2,000 of the country's drivers, has a rented number, paying \$600 a month to the widow of a colleague who inherited her husband's number. Very few women drive cabs in Tel Aviv. Bazaz estimates their number at five or six, all wives of drivers, who take out the cabs on off-hours to supplement the family income.

Bazaz used to own his own number, but sold it six years ago to try his hand as a small business owner. The business faltered, and he's now back on the road, hoping to buy a number in the next round of ministry hand-outs. The \$600 monthly rental fee, plus the \$200 fee he pays monthly to Kastel for its dispatcher service, adds up to a hefty overhead.

It's midnight, and Bazaz gets a call on the two-way to pick up a fare in Tzahala - a group of girls headed for a nightclub on Rehov Hamasger in south Tel Aviv. Hamasger is the street where cabbie Avraham Davidi's body was found two weeks earlier, slumped over his steering wheel with a knife in his back. His killers have not been found, but talk around the station is that drug money was involved.

"Our work is much more dangerous today," Bazaz says with a sigh. "In the past week, three drivers have been held up with guns to their heads, in Ramat Hasharon, Givat Shmuel and downtown Tel Aviv. All in the middle of the day!"

Bazaz minimizes the danger by picking up as few passengers as he can from the street. He prefers to take fares that call into the dispatcher. "But at the end of the night, there's really no choice," he notes. "We have to cruise the streets."

According to the law, cab-drivers may not refuse a fare. But all drivers have their own method of picking and choosing which passengers to take. If it's late at night, and someone is flagging him down, Bazaz starts flashing his headlights from

a distance, to get a good look at the person's face. If he looks drunk or stoned, Bazaz doesn't even slow down.

Still, with hundreds of passengers a week, he can't always avoid trouble. Plenty of times, he's taken addicts to dark alleys where they buy drugs. Rehov Hamasger is a particularly rough area, especially late at night when the clubs get out and hordes of drunk kids are clamoring to go home. Many times people run out of the cab without paying. Rather than fight with an addled brain, Bazaz just wishes these folks good night.

"Sure, I've had incidents," he admits. "But I always manage to talk my way out of them. My mouth is my best weapon."

Once, he picked up three men late at night who wanted to go to the Magen David Adom in Ramat Gan. "They were addicts, probably going to pick up their supply [of methadone]," he notes. "I drove them there as fast as I could, and waited for them to get out so I could drive away. But one guy stayed in the cab, so I had to wait."

"When we got back to Tel Aviv, I asked for NIS 20, even though it was at least a NIS 50 ride. One of them said he thought that was a lot. I got the hint, and didn't take any money. I even gave him NIS 10 to buy cigarettes."

"In these cases, you have to be a diplomat. What did the 50 shekels hurt me? If I'd fought with him, it would have cost me



I love to laugh and joke with people. It makes the time pass more quickly.

a lot more."

The prostitutes are less trouble. Bazaz holds up a roll of toilet paper he keeps under his seat. "That's for mopping up after them," he explains.

At 12:15, we pick up the Tzahala fare—three high-school girls, dolled up for an evening on the town. "We're going to Cat Ballou," says Liron Goldman, 17. "We wish we could drive ourselves instead of taking a cab, but we can't get our licenses for another six months. Taxis are so expensive!"

The girls say they aren't frightened to take cabs late at night from Hamasger, despite the killing two weeks earlier. "We always travel in a group," Goldman explains.

Bazaz spends the rest of the ride telling the girls how to deal with a driver who doesn't put on the meter, and then overcharges. "Pay the bill, take his number, and call the station," he advises. "The driver will be hauled into court and he'll have to pay a NIS 200 fine. It's just the new drivers who do it; once you're in court, you never do it again."

At 12:30, Bazaz drops the girls outside Cat Ballou. The street is pulsing with techno music, and half-drunk young couples clutch at each other, propped up uncertainly against parked cars. "Listen, girls, take your telecard and call the dispatcher when you're ready to leave," Bazaz suggests firmly. "We'll get you home safely."

As we drive away, Bazaz shakes his head. "They'll be heading home at 4 a.m. At their age, I had to be home by 10 p.m. And I was a boy."

"Those are good girls, from good families. They're a lot better quality than the boys who hang out in those clubs. I never have trouble with the Tzahala crowd. They're nice kids."

At 12:40, we pick up Mally Shamir at the corner of Rothschild Blvd. He's on his way to Ramat Aviv Gimmel, to pick up a date. Where are the couple headed? "To bed, I hope," he jokes.

Shamir and Bazaz hit it off immediately, and are trading stories as we shoot up the Ayalon. Shamir is a diamond dealer who owns homes in Tel Aviv and Manhattan. Dressed smartly in a blue shirt and trousers, he looks much younger than his 50 years. "A decade from now, people will be living to 120, no problem," he states.

By 1 a.m. we're in Ramat Aviv, and Shamir and Bazaz are best buddies,

"Listen, wait for me downstairs, and you'll be my driver for the night," Shamir suggests. "Drinks on me."

Bazaz declines, explaining that he promised this reporter a "typical" Friday night ride with a wide spectrum of passengers.

"I'm a wide spectrum all by myself," Shamir protests, as his girlfriend, clad in see-through black bellbottoms, clambers into the back seat. She reeks of watermelon-scented perfume.

"Have you been eating watermelon?" Shamir asks her sharply. She grumbles. We drop them at a members-only club at the north end of Dizengoff. "They don't let everyone in," Shamir notes. "Just Ashkenazim."

"You sure you won't join us?" he asks again, as he hands Bazaz a \$100 bill. Bazaz makes change, smiles and waves him off. "That happens a lot," Bazaz says.

"If I hit it off with someone, they invite me to pubs with them. You never know who will get in your cab."

At 1:45 a.m., Bazaz is sitting at the Arosh Ehad cafe on north Dizengoff, trading stories with a group of drivers. What do cabbies talk about when they get together? Their passengers, mostly.

"I had a fare to the airport the other day," says David Briki, a cabbie for the past 22 years. "The fare is NIS 55. So he wants me to knock off NIS 5. I said, 'You just spent hundreds of dollars to fly abroad, and you're arguing with me over NIS 5? You should be ashamed!' The guys all shake their heads."

Talk turns to the dangers of the job. None of these drivers favor the many safety measures proposed by the Transport Ministry. They reserve particular venom for the "alarm caps" that became obliga-

tory last year following the murder of Netanya cabdriver Derek Roth, whereby a driver in trouble activates two little red lights attached to the left side of his hood. "It's completely useless," Briki mutters. "It costs us each NIS 800, and it isn't worth a grush. It just put NIS 8 million into one guy's pocket."

A group of drivers did an informal experiment recently, where they drove around for hours with the alarm lights activated. No one paid any attention, Bazaz says.

They don't like the idea of a bulletproof partition between the driver and passengers, either.

"It's not esthetic," Bazaz complains. "It would be totally depressing to sit all day in front of that partition."

None of the group carries a gun, despite the recommendation of the National Taxi Drivers Association. And they laugh at the idea of self-defense courses sponsored by the Ministry Transport.

So what would make them feel safer? Most of them liked the idea of an alarm button connected to the police station, which would pinpoint their location immediately. "If he [David] had had one of those, police would have been there in seconds," avers Ari Sapir, a driver with 24 years' experience.

But really, they say, it's a matter of luck and sharp instincts. And despite the dangers and the loneliness, they all prefer the night shifts.

"The people at night are nicer," Bazaz explains. "They're more generous. During the day the rides are all from one office to another—lawyers, secretaries, and they all want receipts for a NIS 10 ride. They're always late, they have appointments across town, they want you to drive faster, and all the time they're grumbling in the back seat."

"At night, people aren't under such pressure. They're out to have a good time, they're going home from concerts or parties. They're in a good mood, and that keeps me in a good mood."

"I'd like to see [Police Minister Moshe] Shahal sit in a cab for three hours during the morning rush hour in Tel Aviv, and see how he likes it," chimes in Briki.

By 3 a.m., Bazaz is back behind the wheel, on his way to south Tel Aviv. He picks up a man headed to Molhiver Street. The fare comes to NIS 11.70, but the guy doesn't have the 70 agorot. "That's OK," Bazaz says. "Just give me the NIS 11."

Afterwards, Bazaz grumbles loudly. "It's always that way. All day long, I take off a

shekel here, a half shekel there, rounding down the fares. But God forbid I should ever try to round a fare up to the nearest shekel! And I'm responsible for the sum on the meter at the end of the day."

Passing back through the Carmel Market, Bazaz rescues a young couple whose Fiat is just being towed away, its front right fender badly crushed. They ask to be driven to Ramat Gan.

The man is shaken, and angry. "That guy came out of nowhere," he explodes. "I stopped at the sign, and went real slow, but he came charging out of that alley without looking. And the annoying thing is, I work as a driver!"

"You had a stop sign," Bazaz says. "Then you're at fault, no matter how fast he was going."

"Then I should tell the police I'm responsible?" the young man queries angrily. "No, don't be ridiculous," Bazaz cautions. "Just describe exactly what happened. Only the facts. Don't add extra information—it can only hurt you."

"Listen, you can't fight this guy in court, so you might as well cut your losses," he says as he drops off the couple at their home. "Just be thankful you walked away in one piece."

By now it's 3:30, and Bazaz is feeling the effects of the past 48 hours. He worked the night before until 2 a.m., slept until 5 a.m., then headed back for a morning shift that ended in the early afternoon with a fire to Golan Junction in Galilee. After a few hours' sleep, he was back behind the wheel by 8 p.m.

Reaching into the glove compartment, he pulls out a bottle of raw ginseng pills, and pops one in his mouth. "It's natural energy," he explains. "All the guys carry them. It gives you a boost when your eyes are closing."

Turning into Carlebach Street, Bazaz heads for the top of Herzl Street, an area that has spawned a half-dozen new clubs in the past season.

"Want to see where our children are?" he asks, as he pulls up at the corner of Herzl Street. There, along the sidewalks outside the clubs, and on the grassy divider in the middle of the street, huddle dozens of bedraggled teenagers.

"They come here every Friday night, but they don't have enough money to get into the clubs," he explains. "So they sit outside, wander around, and then at 4 or 5 in the morning they somehow manage to get home. Then they tell all their friends what a great night they had, so they can look like big shots."

"The kids are my favorite passengers."

WIDOWS SEEK COMPENSATION

Gila Roth still lives in the spacious Netanya seafront apartment she and her husband Derek moved into shortly before he was brutally murdered by two teenage passengers on January 9, 1994.

But at the end of this month, she and her two daughters will move into a much smaller, government-subsidized apartment assigned her by the Housing Ministry.

"It's not at all suitable for us, but I can't afford any more," says Roth, who works for minimum wages in a sewing factory to supplement the NIS 890 monthly payments she receives from the National Insurance Institute. Derek, a cabbie with a Herzliya station, had no pension and no savings.

On June 30, Tel Aviv cab driver Avraham Davidi was knifed to death on the job; his body was left slumped over the wheel in a south Tel Aviv neighborhood. He was the sixth cabbie murdered in the past 18 months, in a spree that began with Roth's death. Three of the six deaths have been chalked up to nationalist motives; two were criminal cases, and the Davidi murder has not yet been solved, although the police believe nationalist motives were not involved.

"I thought, enough is enough," Roth says. She went to Davidi's funeral and met his widow, Tzipora. "I saw to my sorrow, that she was in the same situation I am," Roth says. "She has nothing to live on besides her National Insurance [Institute] payments. I told her, we can't be silent any longer."

The two women appeared the following Sunday on the *New Evening* television talk show, appealing for more protection for cab drivers and calling for the creation of a national organization to help widows of slain drivers.

"The state doesn't recognize us, because we're neither war widows nor widows of terrorist incidents," Roth explains. "We get no special compensation. But we're in the same financial straits."

Roth says that she and the other widows favor installing bulletproof partitions in the country's taxicabs, "like they do in New York."

On July 10, Roth appealed to the Knesset Labor and Social Affairs Committee and asked former chairman MK Amir Peretz, now head of the Histadrut trade union department, for his support in creating such an organization. Davidi did not accompany Roth to the Knesset meetings. "She's too wiped out by her husband's murder," Roth explains.

Roth says that Peretz pledged his help, but she's continuing her efforts via other channels.

"Something must be done or we, the widows, will take matters into our own hands," she vows.

—S.F.

"Sure I do, but it's not as glamorous as you think," Bazaz cautions. "It might seem like fun once or twice a week, but night after night, everything loses its charm. Still, I do meet the whole world in my cab. One minute you can have a real sourpuss, and the next minute, a guy who'll talk your head off."

"It's pretty dangerous, isn't it?" Levy continues. Bazaz shakes his head. "Look at you, 16 years old, and you go home at three in the morning without thinking twice. So why should I be scared? The media make it out to be worse than it is."

"So, you love your work, right?" Levy presses. "I don't love it or hate it," Bazaz retorts. "It's a job, and I do it well."

Bazaz drops Levy near his home, and heads back to Tel Aviv via Rehov Arlosoroff. It's close to 4 a.m., and he cruises south on Dizengoff Street. Most of the restaurants are shuttered, and the few pedestrians strolling by look rather shady.

"When I was 17, Friday night wasn't Friday night without ice cream on Dizengoff Street," he says, smiling broadly. "I'd sit with my friends in a cafe, talking and laughing together. Now, Dizengoff is empty. All the kids are in the clubs. It's just not the same."

At 4:30, Bazaz picks up his final fare of the night—two girls, tourists from Belgium, heading back to a Ben-Yehuda youth hostel after a night of dancing at Columbarium.

"We didn't go to pick anyone up," insists Sharon Nidzinsky, a sociology student at the University of Brussels. "We have boyfriends back in Belgium. We just wanted to go out and have a little fun. The Israeli guys are handsome, but much too snobbish."

The girls get out at their hostel, and a nervous, quite disheveled young man hurries up to Bazaz's window.

"Where's the *shema* to Jerusalem?" he shouts breathlessly. Bazaz looks at his watch in dismay. "At this hour?" He points the man toward the Central Bus Station, and drives on.

"He'll have to sleep there until the Shabbat taxis start at 7 a.m.," he says.

The streets of north Tel Aviv are quiet at this hour. It's a world away from the pulsating beat of Rehov Hamasger and Herzl Street. All in all, it's been a quiet night, for which Bazaz is grateful. "It's not always like this," he notes darkly.

By 5 a.m., he'll crawl into bed for a few hours' sleep, before hitting the road again at 10 o'clock. "I work hard," he states. "Every extra hour is money in my pocket."

■



'Sure, I've had incidents, but I always manage to talk my way out of them.'

MINIMIZING THE DANGERS

Every time a taxi driver gets behind the wheel, he replaces his life in danger, according to National Taxi Drivers Association Chairman Avraham Fried.

"All the various safety measures proposed—the alarms, the tracking systems, the bulletproof partitions—can only reduce the danger, not eliminate it entirely," he notes. "It's not just terrorism, but ordinary criminal elements that present an ongoing threat to the lives of our drivers."

After the January 1994 murder of Netanya cabdriver Derek Roth by two Herzliya teenagers, the Transport Ministry ordered all drivers to install a special "electronic cap" on their car hoods. The plastic cap contains two red lights activated in the event of an emergency by a button near the driver's seat. The system has been installed in nearly half the country's 10,000 taxis, at a cost of NIS 800 to each driver.

Few drivers put any faith in the electronic cap. "No one pays attention," states Tel Aviv driver David Briki. "You can drive around for hours with the red lights flashing, and it doesn't mean a thing."

At the beginning of 1995, the ministry budgeted more than NIS 1 million toward the installation of rigid plastic partitions between the driver and passenger seats of the country's taxicabs. Ministry assistant spokesman Avner Ovadia says the ministry has offered to pay half the NIS 2,000 cost for each driver who wishes to install the partition.

But until now, he notes, not a single driver has applied. Why not? Again, few drivers like the system.

"American taxis are larger, and are built for such a mechanism," Ovadia explains. "The smaller European cars we use in Israel, like the Subaru, don't have room. A partition would make the cab too claustrophobic." Drivers interviewed for this article agree with that assessment.

Fried offers a further explanation. Although the ministry has made this offer, the partition mechanism has not yet been approved by the appropriate ministerial body which controls what devices may be placed in taxicabs.

Furthermore, Fried adds, the ministry has made its offer only to taxis working in Jerusalem. Similarly, the ministry sponsors a new self-defense course for cabdrivers, which dozens of drivers have successfully completed, but the course, too, is offered only in Jerusalem.

"Drivers are killed all over the country, so why just reach out to help drivers in Jerusalem?" Fried asks. "I call upon the ministry to offer this course throughout the country, and I call upon all drivers to participate in it."

A proposed tracking system has also been proposed, whereby a driver in danger could press a button connecting him to a local police station and his dispatcher, so that his location would immediately be pinpointed and police cars could be sent to the scene.

All drivers interviewed for this article favor such a tracking device, which Fried says the Taxi Drivers

Association is also pushing. Ovadia will not confirm whether the Transport Ministry has any concrete plans to develop such a system, saying only that several safety methods "are under discussion."

Fried also wants the ministry to relax its regulation requiring taxi drivers to pick up any passenger who flags them down. Ovadia says that new regulations aren't necessary, as the law already "turns a blind eye" when drivers refuse to pick up passengers who look drunk, drugged or dangerous.

Similarly, there are no written regulations covering drivers' refusals to enter dangerous neighborhoods. Ovadia says each driver must use his own discretion.

"I have no problem driving into the Old City, for example, but I wouldn't go into certain other neighborhoods," he states. "You have to pay attention to what the army and border police tell you, and use your judgment."

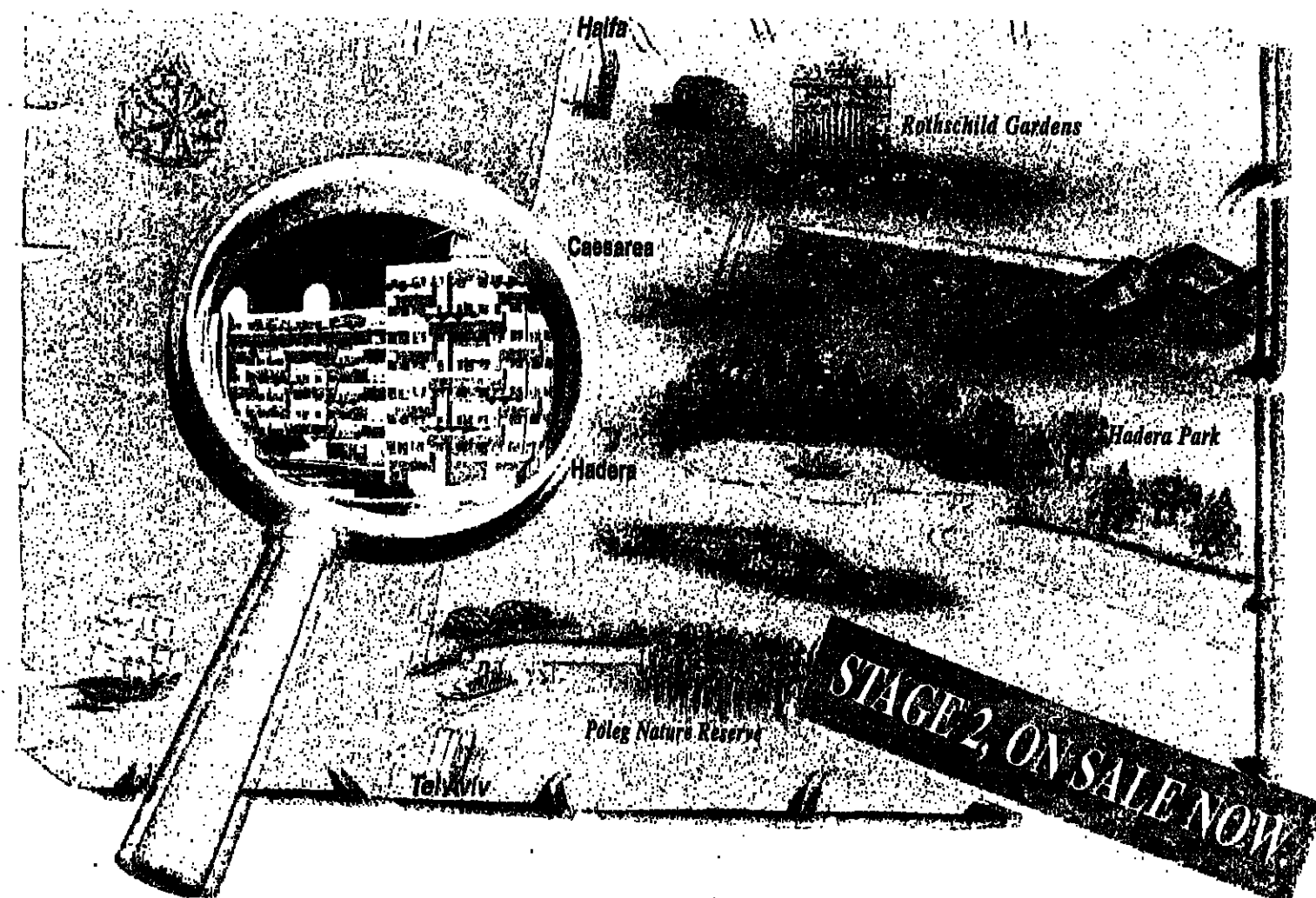
That's fine, drivers say, but what about the three cabbies who faced court fines last year for refusing to take Arab passengers into neighborhoods they considered dangerous? Clearer guidelines are needed to protect the rights of drivers as well as passengers.

With six murders [in the past 18 months] on his hands, the authorities have to take greater steps to protect us," Fried charges. "In the past two years, drivers face greater dangers every day. To my sorrow, it only gets public attention when a driver is killed."

—S.F.

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Golden Age

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SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION



Pets for older people

D'vora Ben Shaul maintains that age in itself is not a drawback

match the personality of the pet to that of the owner.

Most people find that they do well to enlist an assistant when the dog needs a bath but in fact, dogs

need far fewer baths than some think. A couple of times a year is plenty if the dog is regularly groomed. A good brushing will usually keep the dog in top order, and it is definitely worth taking advantage of available pet products that make life easier including flea and tick collars, good grooming aids etc.

It is also a good idea to try to choose a veterinary that lives within walking distance of your home. If this is not possible then try to get your chosen animal doctor to agree to make an occasional house call. You can take your dog on the bus and, according to the rules of the transport companies if a dog is leashed and muzzled and a fare is paid for it then it may ride. Some taxi drivers are wonderful about taking a passenger with a dog, others object. So be sure to speak with the dispatcher at the taxi station and explain that you are ordering a cab for yourself and your animal. If you keep a cat then provide yourself with a good carrying box that is easy to use.

As a companion animal you certainly will not want one that is constantly coming on heat if a female or going out on the tiles if a male. Keep a neutered male - a spayed female. This applies to dogs and to cats. You really don't want to deal with puppies or kittens do you?

But most of all, you be the one who decides if you want to keep a pet. Many older people want to have an animal companion but their adult children who don't even live with them discourage them, saying it "will be too hard on him or her."

Our children, with the best intentions, are often as over-protective of us as we once were of them. You are the one who knows if it will be too much.

The main consideration here is whether you want a companion animal. If so get one and enjoy it. Many say it has made a real difference in their lives. One friend, in his eighties recently suffered the loss of his old dog that died simply of age. He went out and bought himself a puppy. When people expressed amazement he said, "well, dogs only live about 12 years or so. When this one dies then I'll see if I'm too old to get a new one."

Is a person ever too old to keep a pet? No. Not if age is the only consideration. Naturally, if a person is too infirm to take care of a pet then that is another matter but this is a situation that might possibly arise at any age. Not only is age no barrier to keeping a pet but in fact research has shown that it may be quite advantageous for older people to do so.

We have always known that pets, be they dogs or cats, birds or fish, derived a great benefit from the attentions of a conscientious owner, but it is only in recent years that researchers have applied their skills to the relationships between people and their pets and have come up with some very clear findings. Put simply, elderly pet owners live longer and remain in better health than do their non pet keeping contemporaries.

Research done at Duke University in the US found that in a study of 100 people aged 65 to 85, over a ten year period, those who kept pets paid more than one third less visits to the clinics or to their doctor and that over a period of 20 years pet owners showed a 6-9 year advantage in longevity over the ones who kept no pets.

Now some would say that this surely applies only to people who live alone but that is not true. While it is known that elderly people with spouses live longer, even when correcting for this it found that elderly couples who kept pets still outpaced their pet-less contemporaries when it came to living longer.

Other studies have also shown that cardiac patients who adopted a pet after that first coronary lived an average of 5-7 years longer without further attacks than did patients at the same center who did not keep a pet. Not only did they live longer but they were more active and felt better.

So the case for pet keeping seems fairly well established. Even so there are some very special considerations to which an older person should give serious thought before deciding to keep a pet. The first consideration is past experience. If you have always had dogs and raised them yourself, and if you live on the ground floor where you don't have to cope with stairs then you might opt for a puppy. This is all right for the experienced dog owner who will not have a hard time teaching the animal. But if you are a novice pet owner then you might consider an older animal that is already trained to walk on lead and to be clean in the house.

Unless you understand and like cats I would not advise an elderly person to choose a feline as his or her first animal. Cats are, for some of us, the perfect companion but unless one is used to their ways they can be a problem since they are far less likely to obey about climbing into your bed or jumping on a table than will a dog.

Once a person has decided on a dog then it comes down to breed or size of dog, that's entirely up to the owner but there are a few things it might pay to keep in mind. If one has a bad back and finds stooping difficult a small breed dog may be the best. It is an easy matter to teach a dog to hop up onto a table or chair in order to get its leash snapped on or for grooming. In fact a small dog can get most of its grooming either sitting in one's lap or opposite a seated person. As for breeds, some dogs such as terriers are far more active than others. Some people like this, others find it a nuisance. The main thing is to



Older people with feathered and four footed



Successful Aging

Zipporah Porath has discovered that the best way is to do your own thing

THE SELF-CONFIDENT young woman lecturing on guidelines for successful aging was quoting from a panel of experts. Obviously, she had had no personal experience to rely on. The platitude "Life Begins at Forty," had grown old along with her audience and she was now declaring, "Life Begins After Sixty." Whatever happened to

fifty? Some of the guidelines she cited were: self-acceptance, self-determination, self-growth, self-autonomy - a great deal of self - and the need to think positively. I listened with mixed feelings. I wasn't sure what "successful" aging meant - successful by whose standards? And how could one have a positive self-image without the



Never too old to have fun

essentials: good health, good income, good family relations and a reliable support system? How could one take those prerequisites for granted? While the speaker discussed her guidelines, here's what I was thinking...

If you start with the assumption that you had better accept yourself as is, you may already be on a negative course. You may have a distorted view of yourself in the first place. Possibly what kept you going was your refusal to accept yourself and your fractured view of the world and the people around you. Give up your abiding hope that some small effort on your part could make a difference and you might as well step off the planet.

I suspect one can only fantasize about self-determination. Something always gets in the way! With all the determination in the world, age may sap you of the energy and resilience to carry your plan to fruition: you just might self-destruct. But, of course, if you are determined to let nothing stop you, then set realistic goals, summon up your will power and persist - for as long as you can.

Here is something to get your teeth into - if you still have them! The growth process, more likely the disintegration process, will continue apace without your intervention. But, by all means take a do-it-yourself course, go for a degree, develop neglected talents, travel, putter with pottery or paint, create, do your thing - just don't demand perfection. Who needs frustration at this age? Better to settle for what you are able to do and what gives you the most pleasure.

If you are a widow or an abandoned spouse, circumstances force you into self-reliance - a kind of independence that is a personal nightmare. In dealing with it, keep in mind, if you do a good job, your children, friends and neighbors will take you off their worry list. They are busy with their lives. You may see or hear very little of them - until the next emergency. Just don't count on them. Be prepared for disappointment, rejection, and isolation. In fact, the fewer your expectations and demands, the quicker you will be on the road to real independence. Traveling that road may be rough going, as your skeleton shrinks and your feet collapse.

But don't despair. The good news is, if all your life you accepted whatever was dished out to you without losing your cool, your sense of proportion or your faith, and you got along nicely with everyone in your orbit, you will grow old gracefully - you don't need tips for successful aging.

If you never learned to activate your "self," the tips may not help. The bottom line is, you will never know what you might or might not be capable of if you don't try. Be grateful that at this age you are being given a new lease on life, a chance to use your time as you see fit - to relate to yourself and those closest to you in new ways.

I had left the speaker and her guidelines far behind with her voice fading away. I was thinking of guidelines from my own life experience.

Keep a sense of the self you always liked best. It is probably more acceptable than any updated version. Keep a lively interest in what goes on around you. You may make

your mark where you least expect it and surprise a lot of people who forgot that you still had it in you.

Keep busy or not busy. That means do whatever you like whenever you feel like it. Sleep late if you want to and don't feel guilty about it.

Keep fit. If you never moved a muscle in that direction, start slow. I strongly recommend swimming. It beats a bathtub any time. Walking is good too. As for diet, listen to everyone's good advice and then do it your way - eat more or eat less.

Keep your tongue and temper in check: say less than you are thinking. This may be extremely frustrating but it has its compensations. The effort at control can consume a lot of unwanted calories! More so, if you try not to show what an effort it is.

Keep your good memories on tap and your favorite photographs on the wall. Keep a good sense of humor, if you have one, but on a leash, like your dog on a walk. You never can tell who it may bite and what the repercussions may be.

Keep a smile on your face to greet the world. Wear some make-up and a becoming outfit. You better believe it, appearances do count. Don't pay too much attention to what others tell you to do or not to do. Do what makes you feel good.

And if these guidelines don't work for you, make up your own.

Zipporah Porath is a freelance writer and author of the book, "Letters from Jerusalem 1947-1948."

Belt Frankforter

Life can be enriched as one ages say the senior citizens who benefit from the myriad of activities available at Belt Frankforter, Jerusalem Center for the Aged. Among the interesting choices are workshops in sewing, knitting, copper engraving, embroidery, ceramics, silk screening and picture making with the use of dried flowers. The finished products are sold in Belt Frankforter's beautiful new gift shop.

Aside from providing creative outlets for latent talent, Belt Frankforter organizes lectures, field trips through the length and breadth of Israel and holiday celebrations. There is a synagogue on the premises, with courses in Bible study. Ulpan classes and lessons in English are also available. In addition, regulars at Belt Frankforter can take advantage of medical and dental services as well as physiotherapy. In Belt Frankforter's recently opened clinics, Transportation is available for the handicapped and a social worker is also on duty. A meal service has also been introduced. Belt Frankforter Jerusalem Center for the Aged is located at 80 Bethlehem Road, Baka, Jerusalem, and is open daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. The hours on Friday are 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

Belt Frankforter

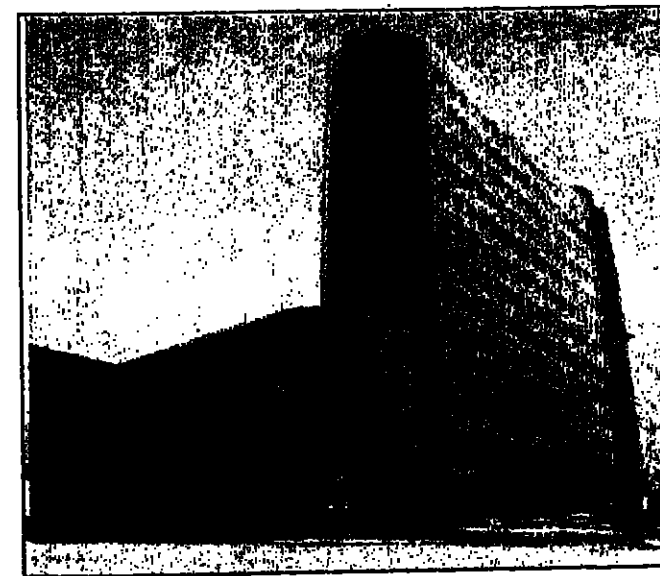
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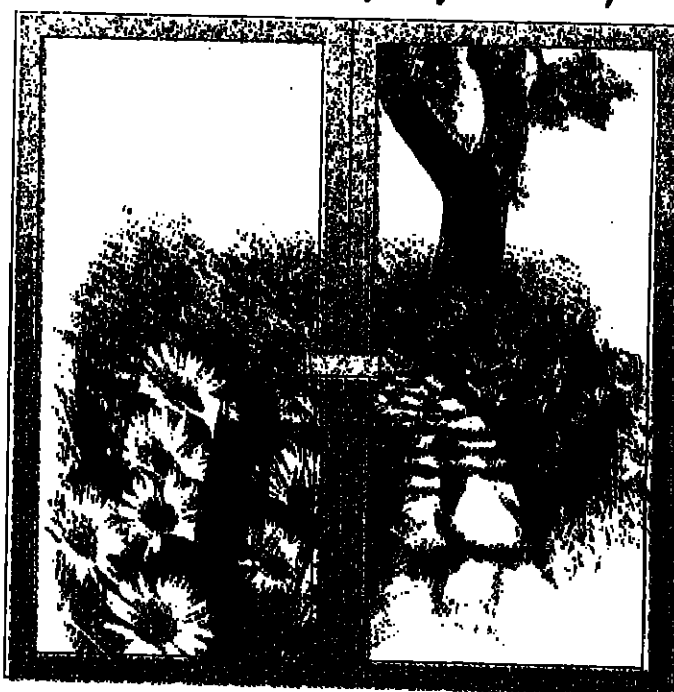
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MOST PEOPLE, especially artists, are sensitive to age, cautions Chaim Schlegel of the Habima administration staff. Nevertheless, some veteran theater personalities talk frankly about rewards of the profession that continue into their golden years.

"Memory has nothing to do with age," says Habima trouper, Shimon Finkel, at close to 90, is currently appearing in Edmond Morris's *The Wooden Bowl*. Despite his age, Finkel continues to be in constant demand. Still romantic about his labor of love in theater, he declares, "Theater and actor are a matter of matchmaking. Like lovers they have to click. Otherwise, no match," he concludes.

Born in Russia, Finkel studied drama with Max Reinhardt in Berlin. He played his first Hebrew-speaking role when a company of Jewish actors from Palestine came to perform there and subsequently took Finkel home with them. He returned to Berlin from Palestine in 1927 and joined Habima, touring the US with them before immigrating to what was to become the Jewish State. Besides acting, Finkel served as the company's artistic director for several years.

Finkel has to his credit over 170 leading roles in the Israel theater which include that of Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*, Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, King Lear, Peer Gynt, Tuvya, The Milkman, and more recently the lead in the Habima production of *The Dresser*.

Audiences marvel at Finkel's mastery of difficult parts at his age and ask how does he do it.

He has no idea. He says it's like asking which foot he puts forward first in walking and contemplating that he finds himself unable to walk at all. Still, he makes a stab at explaining, "It's not a question of good or bad memory. You either have memory or not." Fortunately, he has had a good memory from childhood and has not noticed any change with advancing years. When he was younger, however, he admits, it was a cinch to learn his lines. Now, he has to like the role and when he doesn't, it takes a bit longer to learn it. That, however, does not mar his passionate love for being on stage, he is quick to add.

Finkel's memory gets full play also in every conversation and his writing where he shows total recall. He is now working on his 12th volume of memoirs in Hebrew, chronicling his career to date with reminiscences of theater greats he has known and played with. Finkel writes by hand and goes over every page of proofs himself.

"The theater is my life," asserts Finkel's much younger Habima colleague, Ada Tal, now 72. "But," she



Ada Tal



Shimon Finkel



Yaffa Yarkoni



Orna Porat

Thespians say that age is no impediment

Diana Lerner

adds, "the moment I find I am not able to perform, I'm prepared to leave the stage." That is obviously a long way off for the Habima veteran who still spends more time on stage than off. Not that all of her roles are exactly to her liking, she admits, but this is where being an experienced trouper comes in, she says. Now appearing in Assunta in Tennessee Williams's *Rose Tattoo*, Tal had a long run also as Anfissa in Chekov's *Three Sisters*.

She also played the title role in *Anna Frank*, and had important roles in *Uncle Vanya*, *Blood Wedding*, the Cameri's *The House of Bernarda Alba* and numerous other productions.

These days it is a bit harder for her to learn her part, she confesses, adding, "I don't push too hard to undertake anything I feel is beyond me. I often played the part of a much younger person and when I had to be elderly, I would observe how the

elderly walk and behave and I tried to get inside to imagine how they thought and felt. I didn't mind at all, especially since I have a weakness for elderly people and enjoy being with them. They have seasoned wisdom which they gained with experience and I appreciate that.

"Actually I don't think about age. I just live for the day and try to enjoy every minute of it. God helps those who strive on so if I wake up in the morning and find I can read, take a walk, meet friends, enjoy art, perform my role on the stage, I feel I'm ahead. The rest doesn't count."

Ebullient, witty, and outgoing, Ada Tal is one of the most delightful people in the Israel theater, colleagues say.

Similar zest for living and passion for work may also be Orna Porat's secret. Known for many stellar per-

formances and founder of children's theater here, Porat recently added Yiddish to her linguistic collection for her role in the Yiddishspiel's *Mirele Effros*. Unfazed by the fact that many of the greats in Yiddish theater performed the part before her, Porat enters the role with gusto. While her knowledge of German helped her initially in learning *Mama Loshen*, it has also hindered her as she had to suppress her instinctive pull to her native tongue in order to master the required Yiddish for her role.

Still handsome at 70 without a drop of makeup, Porat does nothing to camouflage her greying hair and pepper shade of hair or hide the character lines in her face. Her whirlwind activity to which she attributes her youthfulness includes swimming daily, playing tennis, attending Feldenkrais exercise classes, reading, being with friends, seeing theater and rehearsing the-

lessly when necessary.

Her credo to enjoy every moment for which God has given her energy, not to waste time in idle talk or dwelling on failures. She admits to having badly wanted two roles that she did not get. They were Medea and Mother Courage, but her disappointment vanished when she was offered other roles she wanted as much, she recalls.

"Don't fester on failure. Go on to the next thing," she advises. "So what if a play is a flop? You get over it and put in your energy into what comes next."

Every age has a beauty of its own, Porat firmly believes. "In any case, I've always liked being with older people. Like old trees, they've weathered storms and the vicissitudes of nature and learned to survive. They are not bothered by pettiness; they're above it."

"The secret is not to lose one's optimism," Orna Porat emphasizes. "After all," she muses, "isn't it better to feel tired from running or working hard, than to feel relaxed as a happy dolphin flapping in the ocean?" she asks rhetorically.

Still going strong with no thought of retiring is Yosef Milo, founder of the Cameri Theater, who has no dearth of offers to appear on stage. He was recently seen in *The Three Sisters* and is constantly considering new vehicles offered him.

The same is true of Yossi Yadin, whose career on the Israel stage spans almost half a century. The first Israeli-born actor here Yadin has played over 100 leading roles to date, and is not about to let up in an active career that began at an early age, before the birth of the State. Yadin admits to having always had to work hard learning his lines, "nothing to do with age," but this has not staled his passionate love of his work. An infinitely versatile actor, he has played in Yair Agnon's *Tmol Shilshon*, in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and *All My Sons*, a revival of Pinter's *The Homecoming* and most recently, in Fleischer, Pollard, Mr. Halperin and Mr. Johnson.

Being an actor is the most exciting life in the world, the 73-year-old veteran maintains. And certainly, retirement is not in his vocabulary, not for a long time, it is clear.

A veteran performer in another field, singer Yaffa Yarkoni is ardent about keeping busy. She starts her round of activities at seven in the morning no matter how late her evening performances bring her back home. Nor have invitations to perform for audiences here or those in all parts of the world diminished with time. When she hears people have been asking whether she is still around or is still singing, the entertainer, who began her career singing for soldiers while a signal corps operator during the War of Independence, quips, "Why shouldn't I be?"

At 69, she is still graceful, youthful-looking, and able to render 900 songs in seven or eight different languages by heart. She has recorded 67 long play records which she is now converting to compact disks and is constantly adding new music to her repertoire.

When interviewed she was rehearsing for a concert to accompany children's dances choreographed by Yonatan Carmou in the Festival of Dance in Carmiel.

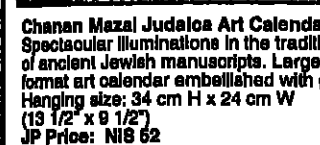
Yes, she does have memory lapses, she admits. Usually after an hour or two of singing an all Spanish or Japanese program, when it is hard for her to remember even *Hava Nagila* in the original Hebrew. ■

CALENDARS 1995/96

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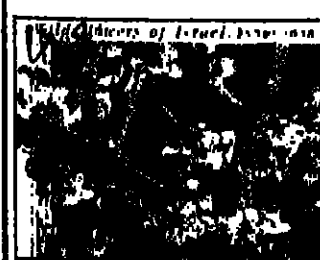
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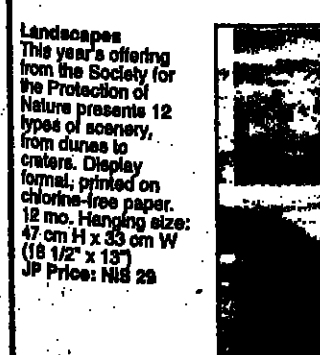
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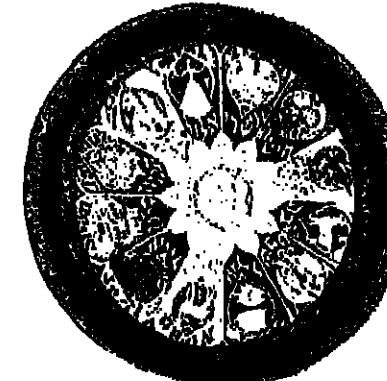
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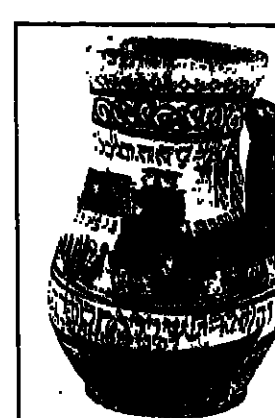
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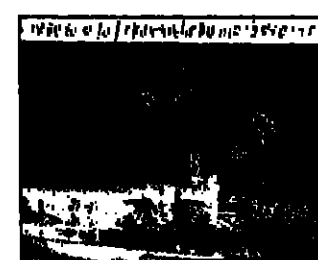
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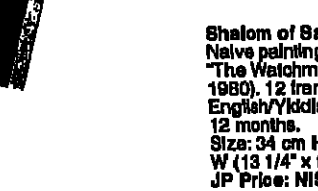
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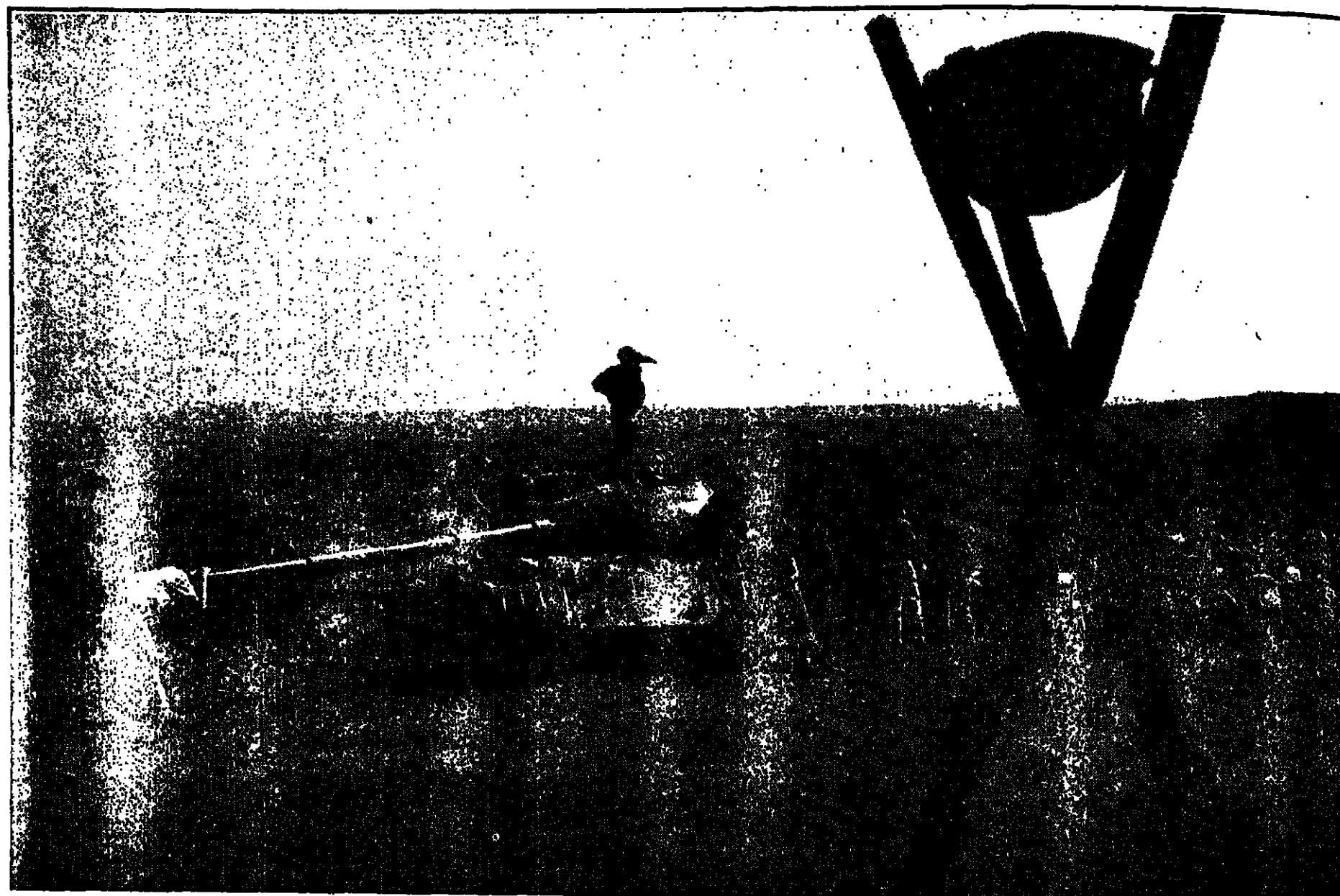
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The roads leading to the Golan Heights pass old Syrian bunkers overlooking the Hula Valley and the Kinneret. Since 1967, guides have stood at these outposts and recounted Syrian attacks on Israeli settlements, as well as the battles of the Six Day War.

The contrasts on the Golan Heights are striking. Despite the proximity to the border with the country's greatest adversary, a quiet placidity reigns. The snow on Mount Hermon glistens above golden dry fields.

You wouldn't know from a visit that the region's future is the subject of intense political debate throughout the country. Sure you can see plenty of posters, banners and stickers proclaiming how the nation is with the Golan, or that the residents do not intend to move from it, but many local residents are simply too busy hosting visitors to engage in political debates.

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel has free 1 1/2-hour tours from the top of Mount Hermon every day, including Shabbat, at 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Most of the peaks are closed to the public, but through the SPNI you get to pass through the army checkpoint and enter areas that are usually inaccessible.

Why is it called "Hermon"? According to Tall, our jovial SPNI guide, the name derives from the Hebrew *herem*, or ban. In traditional pagan cultures, the highest mountain was the exclusive quarter of the gods, and off-limits to the common folk.

The Hermon sits within the geopolitical definition of the Golan Heights, even though its geology is quite different from the rest of the relatively flat heights. Most of the Golan consists of black volcanic basalt, while the Hermon is made up of

THE EYES OF THE COUNTRY

You can pick cherries, swim in Brechat Ram or simply see the magnificent views from Mount Hermon. A visit to the Golan Heights is a great way to get away from summer in the city.

By Bruce Temkin

limestone. The two rock formations are divided by Nahal Sa'ar.

The Syrian-African Rift is responsible for creating the mountainous heights, and

the deep valley from the Hula to Eliat. As the two continental plates collided, the eastern side moved north, leaving a deep rift. At the Hermon, neither plate would

yield, and the plates pushed each other upwards to create the mountain.

The highest peak of Mount Hermon falls under Syrian control, but at 2,224 meters high, Mitzpe Shingim is the highest point within Israel, and off-limits to civilians. It also holds the record for the country's largest annual rainfall, at approximately 1,600 millimeters.

The views over both Israel and Syria are dramatic, but hold on to your hat, and small children, as the wind gusts are fierce. Despite the military importance of the site, you can meander around most of the mountain peak as bored reserve soldiers watch from on high.

From the eastern lookout of Mount Hermon you have a spectacular view of the Golan Heights and the valley leading to Damascus, but the Syrian capital is only for the eyes of a few privileged "non-civilians."

On a clear day, so they say, you can see the Haifa University tower, and even the outskirts of Tel Aviv. No matter what the weather conditions, you'll understand why Mount Hermon is called "the eyes of the country."

The large body of water visible from the eastern lookout of Mount Hermon is Brechat Ram. One of the few swimming holes in the Golan Heights accessible by means other than hiking, it's just a few hundred meters northeast of the Druse village of Mas'ada. There's a felafl stand in the large parking lot and a restaurant which serves local Druse specialties.

To get to the water itself you must pay the felafl-man NIS 5 (NIS 3 for children under 12). The few meters down to the water is a steep slope, sheltered by grapevines and surrounded by apple, fig and pear trees.

A small, shaded, grass beach includes a few wooden benches with just enough room for a picnic. The water is icy and refreshing and you can rent paddle boats



for NIS 30 per hour. Get there early as there are only two boats.

Brechat Ram is so perfectly round it seems unnatural. The many theories about the lake include the claim by Josephus Flavius in his *Wars of the Jews* that it was one of the sources of the Banyas. We know now that Josephus was mistaken and that the water emerges from the Golan Druse town of Ein Kuniya.

Most scholars today believe that the pool was formed when an erupting volcano collapsed. The ensuing crater in its center is fed by Mount Hermon's melting snows.

Outside of Katzrin and the Druse villages, restaurants are few and far between. And the ones that do exist are no culinary delight. This is a pity as the Golan is known for its wine, cherries and berries.

Early in the summer, all the roads leading up to and around the Golan are full of little stands selling different varieties of cherries. Unfortunately it's too short a season. By now you can indulge yourself in a culinary treat unique to the Golan Heights, a delightful variety of wild berries ripening on the vine. All the different varieties of berries grow exceptionally well on the Golan Heights due to the cold winters. The cold increases the fruits' sugar supply. As opposed to other fruit, the berries grow on small bushes.

And you can even pick your own. Ronni Levi from Moshav Sha'al has opened up his fields for anyone to come and pick from his selection of berries.

A NIS 10 "taster's fee" allows you unlimited eating of blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, currants and gooseberries. The fee includes all you can eat at the site.

If you want to take some home, Levi provides baskets and charges by weight. According to Levi, "It's just like in

America. We have a lot of fruit on the bushes. We're going to need your help this year [picking it]."

If you do go picking berries, wear a pair of gloves as most of the bushes have thorny branches. And go early - the fruit softens during the heat of the day making it more difficult to pick.

Levi's farm is open Sunday to Friday, 8:30 to 3:30 and is located 10 km. north of Moshav Sha'al on road 978. Look for the large hand-painted sign in Hebrew just beyond the army base.

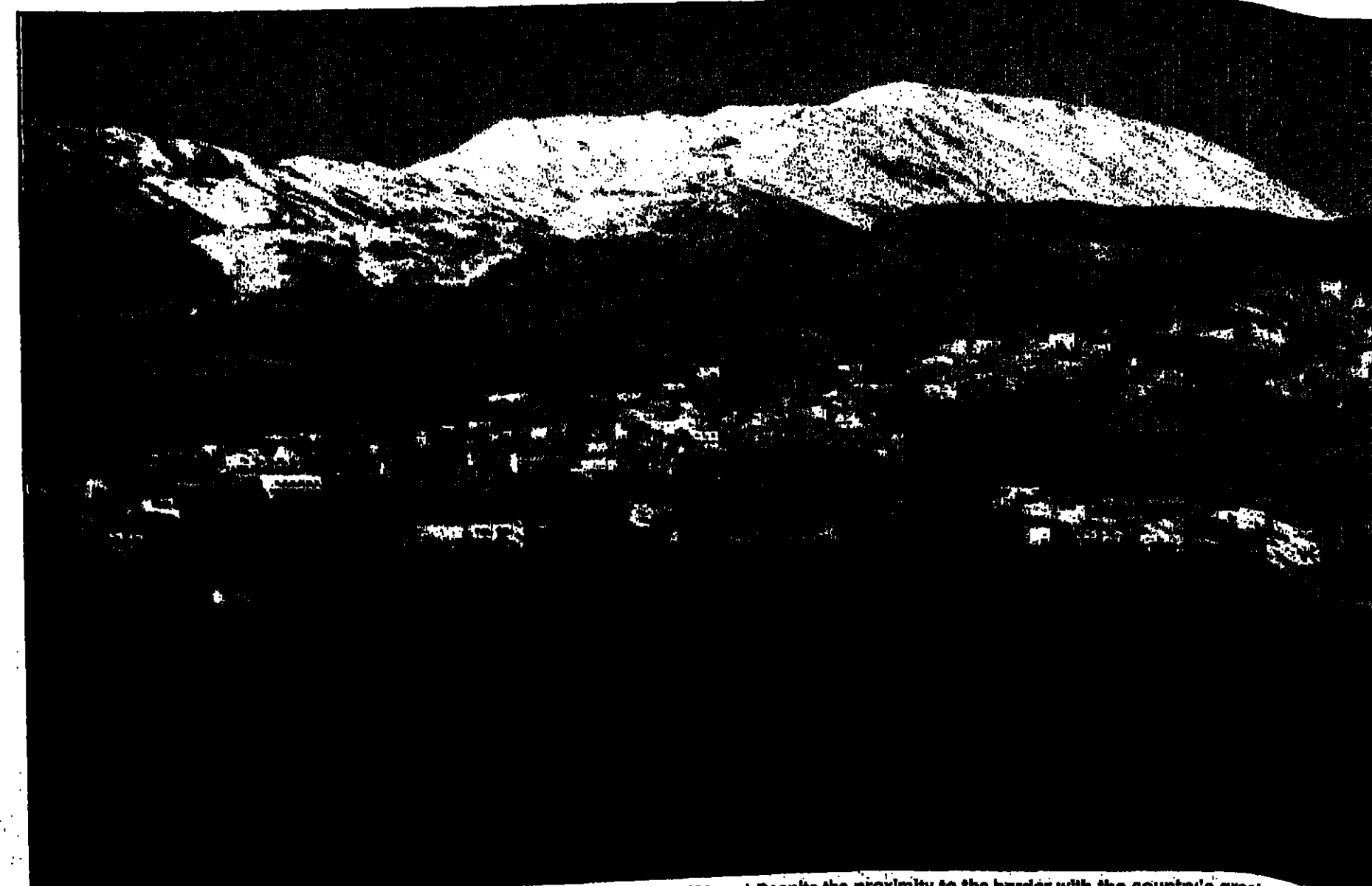
If you can only go on Shabbat, call Moshav Sha'al's Aryeh Mishali on 06-981872 and he will probably open up his field for you on a Saturday. The berry season officially opens June 15 and lasts through September.

No trip to the Golan would be complete without a visit to the Golan Wineries in the Katzrin Industrial Park. The NIS 9 entrance fee includes a tour of the site as well as a wine-tasting session.

The visitors' center has been renovated and is now a pleasantly cool stone building. The grounds are lined with ancient lintels from excavations depicting grapes and wine production, and the entrance hall provides depictions of the history and development of wine production. Each tour begins with a short video about the winery.

While the winery sparkles with cleanliness and technical efficiency, it lacks the warmth and charm of its counterparts in California and France. Nevertheless, much of the production process is open to the tour and well marked in both Hebrew and English.

Shalom, our guide, led us with enthusiasm and verve. He was knowledgeable about the wines produced there and how to drink them. He says that one of the big benefits of producing wine on the Golan Heights is the wide range of growing conditions in such a small



(Top) No trip to the Golan is complete without a visit to the Golan Wineries. (Above) Despite the proximity to the border with the country's greatest adversary, a quiet placidity reigns over the region. (Facing page) Military sites are a reminder that it's impossible not to get political about the Golan Heights.

JULY 21, 1995 21

THE NEW BATTLE ON THE GOLAN

Beyond the world of politics, there's another battle on the Golan Heights. It's a battle for accommodation, and thousands of people join the frenzy each weekend.

Plenty of Golan residents are rushing to get in on the boom. One local hotel proprietress exaggerates just a bit when she says, "The entire Golan Heights has turned into one big *timmer* [bed-and-breakfast hotel]."

Summer crowds give a whole new meaning to the slogan "the people are with the Golan." Unlike some other regions in the country, the Golan does not have a central reservations number, which is unfortunate as reservations are essential for most weekends year-round. Weekdays are pretty empty and also significantly cheaper. Useful phone numbers include: Kibbutz Merom Golan, 06-960111/267; Kibbutz Ortal, 06-960808; and Moshav Odem, 06-983585.

Almost all of the accommodations on the Golan are bed-and-breakfasts in kibbutzim and moshavim. Most of the Jewish settlements now have such facilities and all have the orange Tourism Ministry signs directing you in from the road.

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel also operates three field schools on the Golan Heights, at Katzin, Keshet Yotvata and Hennon. They all operate like B&Bs, though they are a bit cold and stark.

The prices at the kibbutz B&B establishments are about NIS 200 per room per night on the weekend and about NIS 150 per room during the week. All come with a hearty kibbutz breakfast, usually in the communal dining hall. Most also provide a lounge with a television and coffee facilities. And of course you are entitled to use the swimming pool, tennis and basketball courts.

MOST OF the Golan's buildings are relatively new, since most of the kibbutzim and moshavim were established after the 1973 Yom Kippur War. And the lush, green

grounds are as far away from the congestion and noise of the city as you can get. The identical B&B houses are usually isolated from the rest of the kibbutz.

If it seems like a perfect getaway, be warned: If you have ever been a kibbutz volunteer or Nahal member, the rooms may seem frighteningly familiar. Although they have been refurbished for paying visitors, if you suffer from post-kibbutz stress syndrome, you may want to check out another overnight option.

If you have a tent or at least a sleeping bag, you can always find room at the campsites attached to the field school at Katzin. It is the only legal place to camp on the Golan, and is usually overrun by school groups during the week and left for individuals and families on the weekends.

The site is located within a natural forest on the outskirts of Katzin, 150 meters beyond the field school. At NIS 13 per person per night, you can't beat the price. A limited number of bungalows are available. They sleep six and cost NIS 120 per bungalow. The campsite is open 24 hours a day and offers hot showers and flush toilets. You can also enter the Zivian canyon by foot directly from the campsite (telephone 06-961657).

IF CAMPING still reminds you too much of the army, how about a small pension at Neveh Atiy? This moshava, founded in 1971, was named after four soldiers from an elite unit who died when their jeep ran over a land mine in the Golan.

Neveh Atiy is perched 1,000 meters above the Hula Valley. In the shadow of Mount Hermon, its climate makes Neveh Atiy a popular family spot for weekends. The lush meadows, the views of Nimrod's Forest and the green valley below are truly beautiful. The moshava has a swimming pool and tennis courts. Mountain views are also available from the main entrance and a small cafe.

The lodgings, with their red-tile roofs and wooden porches, look like little Swiss chalets. Unfortunately the charm is cheapened by a neon Coca-Cola sign advertising the different hotels.

But you would be a hard-pressed to call any of the five lodgings in Neveh Atiy a "hotel." The main reason for the name "hotel" preceding every location may be to justify the higher prices. Most rooms here start at NIS 300 per room at weekends. Although the exteriors and lobby are enticing, the rooms are quite small and sparse.

All of the lodgings are located in a line on the main road of the moshava. The first site along the road is the Hunter's Hotel which, as its name implies, organizes wild boar and deer-hunting expeditions.

Down the road is the attainable Hotel Alimi, whose sign is in Hebrew only. The sole kosher place in Neveh Atiy, this quaint hotel has lovely rooms facing a manicured garden with a small pool - more like an oversized jacuzzi - in the center.

No matter where you stay at Neveh Atiy, you can take advantage of the swimming pool (and large kiddie pool), tennis and basketball courts. Neveh Atiy has a central information center, 06-981333, but the staff won't make reservations for you.

IF YOU'RE looking to be pampered at a five-star hotel, you'll have to return to Tiberias. Last winter, Tiberias Atiy, the only truly luxurious hotel on the whole Golan Heights, opened at the foot of Mount Hermon. But it has already closed due to financial problems.

If you are looking for any of the hotels at Neveh Atiy, be sure to ask for a discount coupon for the Mount Hermon cable car - even if you don't ski. The price is NIS 2.2 for adults, NIS 1.6 for children and Neveh Atiy guests. Make sure to bring a sweater, as it's a chilly 15 degrees.

vicinity. The acidic soil of the northern Golan has extremely low temperatures and snow during the winter, while the southern Golan consists of clay soil and enjoys much warmer temperatures.

The adjacent store selling Golan wines is disappointing - the prices and selections were no different than in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem.

The visitors' center is open Sunday to Thursday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and on Fridays 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. You should call in advance (06-962001) since tours only run when there are at least 10 people or a previous reservation.

In this day and age, it's practically impossible not to get political about the Golan Heights. For the military and political side of things, make sure to stop by one of the many abandoned Syrian bunkers dotting the area.

One of the most accessible bunkers is at Mitze Gadot, overlooking Kibbutz Gadot. Approach it by turning east on road number 91 just north of Rosh Pina. Directly after passing Kibbutz Gadot, the road winds down to the Jordan River, passing unused Israeli positions facing the Heights.

Once you cross the Jordan, ascend into the heights, beyond the destroyed bulk of the customs house from the British Mandate period.

Further along the road is a kiosk selling Golan Heights memorabilia. On the opposite side of the street is the former Syrian bunker facing Kibbutz Gadot. If you descend below the lookout, you can approach a shaded area complete with a well-preserved bunker, as well as a superb view over the Hula Valley.

To view our present-day border with Syria, continue east along road number 91 until just after Kibbutz Ein Zivan. Take the left-hand fork to road 98. The road rises to two lookouts over the border. Get out of your car here and climb up the overlook. At the top is a map of the Golan Heights, shaped like a key.

Still, there is a plaque there with some basic information about the border and the Syrian side. It's fascinating to see so far into Syria. With the help of binoculars, you can even see some Syrians nearby.

Overlord of Genocide

IRAQ'S CRIME OF GENOCIDE: The Anfal Campaign Against the Kurds by Human Rights Watch, Middle East, New Haven and London, Yale University Press. 373pp. Price not stated.

By Dennis Eisenberg

Some were blind. Some could not reach our village. The spirit left them on the way." (Na'ima Hassan Qader of Galnaghaj, describing the exodus of villagers from the chemical attack on the neighboring village of Goklapi, May 3, 1988.)

"They have sunk into deep water. They were lost. We have no information about them." (Elderly female survivor from the same village talking about her family and neighbors.)

"There was medicine from the airplane. It was the Day of Judgement. You stand before God." (Survivor of poison gas attack on Halabja, March 16, 1988.)

"If you know about hell, this is hell. We have seen it." (Muhammad Hussein Muhammad, survivor of a gas attack on his village.)

"It was the first time people were taken away to be finished off." (A farmer witness.)

REPORTS have appeared from time to time about the campaign of Saddam Hussein's government to crush the spirit of the 3.5 million Kurds in Iraq. They are a Moslem, Indo-European people who speak a Persian-like language and live in different parts of the Middle East.

Charges of genocide have been leveled against the Iraqis. Because it was difficult for neutral observers to physically check these reports in the isolated mountainous regions where the Kurds live, there was always a suspicion that such atrocities might be exaggerated. There were no TV cameras recording how the Iraqi army dropped poison gas on civilians. Or how tens of thousands of Kurdish men, women and children were rounded up and transferred to distant parts of the country. CNN and other TV news companies either did not have the will or the ability to penetrate into the areas where the massacres took place.

Operation Desert Storm, however, did more than crush Saddam Hussein's plans to take control of the oil wells of Kuwait and follow on with his suspected grand design to invade Saudi Arabia. Kurdish rebels took advantage of the war situation to seize more than 18 metric tons of official Iraqi state documents from government offices. Just as the Nazis did in Germany, the Iraqi functionaries involved in the campaign of genocide kept meticulous records of all Kurds rounded up and killed or imprisoned in resettlement camps.

The man in charge of slaughtering Kurds is Hassan al-Majid, a cousin of Saddam Hussein. Known as "Ali Chemical" to his victims, he was the overlord of the Kurdish genocide, in an operation called "Anfal" (spoils in Arabic). When challenged about demands from Kurd representatives who wanted to know what had happened to their estimated 182,000 missing fellow nationals, Ali Hassan (since promoted by Saddam to be defense minister) blurted out indignantly: "It could not have been more than 100,000."

THE SEIZED documents were shipped off to the US where the Human Rights Watch organization has been busy over the last four years translating and seeking to authenticate the material. It has



Two of the more than 4,000 citizens of the Iraqi city of Halabja who perished in an Iraqi chemical attack on March 16, 1988.

employed experts in many fields to sift through this mountain of eyewitness and official paperwork.

The question must be asked: Can the HRW be trusted to be objective?

One believes so. It is an organization funded by private contributions and major charitable trusts. Its aim is to monitor abuses of human rights around the globe. It has carried out similar investigative activities in El Salvador and Peru. As a result of its latest findings it is now working towards presenting its case of Iraqi genocide to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

Perhaps even more damning than the hundreds of eyewitness accounts in this book are the comments of the executioners themselves. Reported Ali Hassan al-Majid's office in November 1988: "With God's help, we have managed to eliminate from our beloved North the saboteur factions and collaborators with the enemy."

The situation there...calls for certain measures commensurate with this new phase."

God? To slay human beings like this in the name of God? With God's help to bomb civilians, fellow Moslems, going about their daily business? All equal, as the Koran declares, in the eyes of Allah. Allah the Compassionate?

Read what one of Hassan's officers told the villagers trying to flee from the terror: "Bring your families. Nothing will happen to them." These are surely familiar words echoing what Jews heard in the ghettos of Europe before being transported to the sites of their murder. Instead of the Kurd civilians being sent to concentration camps, they were taken to wired areas in bleak areas without food, water or shelter. Few survived. Who says so? None other than one of Hassan's army officers while looting one of the doomed villages. He put it this way: "These people are heading towards death. They cannot take money or

gold with them."

The book contains copies of a large number of original Anfal documents, as well as precise details of the attacks carried out by its forces. This what it has to say about the way the Kurds were treated: "Tens of thousands of women, children and elderly people were, in conditions of extreme deprivation, jailed or warehoused. Hundreds died of malnutrition and disease. Hundreds of thousands of others were trucked into areas far from their homes. There was no provision for relief, housing, clothing or food. They were forbidden to return to their homes on pain of death. Many died within a year of their forced displacement."

To this day neither their relatives nor their friends know what happened to the missing. Nor does Human Rights Watch know. It has no access to documents gathering dust in some Iraqi office or other.

IT IS TRUE that the scale of genocide carried out by Saddam Hussein on the Kurds of his country cannot compare statistically with the six million Jews who died in the Holocaust. Between 50,000 and 100,000 men, women and children died in these attacks. "Two thousand villages were wiped off the face of the map."

The Kurds still living in Iraq can perhaps be grateful to the fact that Iraq has neither the Teutonic efficiency nor the mechanical means at the disposal of an Eichmann to have exterminated all of them. But Saddam Hussein's determination to leave not a single Kurd alive is made abundantly clear.

Report the authors: "The Iraqi Ba'athist threat to the Kurdish enclave is as potent as ever. Behind a military cordon across Northern Iraq, a cordon that has sealed off supplies of food, fuel, medicine and other essentials...the Government has amassed its troops. All that holds them back is the threat of retaliation from the American, British and French aircraft that daily patrol the region of Iraq north of the 36th parallel. However it is unlikely that the Western Allies will be able to maintain their protective shield indefinitely."

A Work for Specialists

THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT PALESTINE by Gosta W. Ahlstrom. Minneapolis, Fortress Press. 990 pp. + XXXII pp. Price not stated.

By Nissim Rejwan

One's initial reaction on seeing *The History of Ancient Palestine* is to wonder why the world needs another such history.

Fortunately, the author - who at the time of his retirement in 1988 held a joint appointment at the University of Chicago Divinity School and at the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations - was himself often confronted with this question; and his answer, as he puts it, was that "this one had not been written."

The question, he explains, had been put to him with "the *a priori* understanding that my opus would be a history of Israel, and there are already enough of those in

the market." However, these books had their limitations: their main concern being "a presentation of the peoples of Israel and Judah, and too often they merely accept the views of the biblical writers as reliable reflections of past events and their causal relationships."

Throughout his years of teaching Syro-Palestinian history, Prof. Gosta Ahlstrom adds, he felt the need to try to present the history of the peoples of Palestine through the millennia "in a form freed from the bias of the biblical writers."

He is aware that the task he took upon himself was a difficult one. But he tried, and the results of his valiant attempt are evident here.

Readers must be warned, however, that this is a work for the specialist, possibly for the specialist's specialist. A case in point is the six-page, footnote-crammed excursus on the Abram/Abraham biblical narrative, ■

HIKING IN THE GOLAN

For the only time in the Golan Heights, you can hike on the mountain side of the Golan Heights.

The Golan Heights is a beautiful area with many hiking trails. The Golan Heights is a beautiful area with many hiking trails.

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German Guilt



David Ben-Gurion getting a point across to Konrad Adenauer through an interpreter.

ETERNAL GUILT: Forty Years of German-Jewish-Israeli Relations by Michael Wolffsohn. New York, Columbia University Press. 225 pp. Price not stated.

By Miriam Kraus

Michael Wolffsohn, an academic in the field of government, living and working in Germany, is a man of three identities: the Jewish, the German and the Israeli, in which he was born and brought up during his first formative years and to which he returned for three years in order to serve in the IDF. This deserves to be mentioned, since the book deals with, among other subjects, the complex issue of German-Jewish identity, which we as Israelis and Jews cannot afford to ignore. I must admit that, like most of us, I am not above judging rather harshly people who choose to live in Germany, especially if they have an Israeli background; however, at the same time I cannot but admire the rational, detached and objective way in which Wolffsohn tackles German-Jewish-Israeli relations in general and German-Jewish identity in particular.

The three main topics of the book are relations between Germany and Israel on the governmental level, public attitudes and behavior in both countries, and relations between Germans and Jews living in Germany.

With regard to the first topic, the book reminds us of the stormy era after the foundation of the state when Ben-Gurion, alone among the political elite of the country, realized the potential of establishing relations with Germany and harnessed all his political and personal resources to the goal of achieving this aim, dragging his party after him. At the other end, Konrad Adenauer, a man of high moral stature and great political acumen, succeeded in accomplishing this within his own government against very serious obstacles. The restitution agreement was signed at a time when the German economy needed all its

resources to rearm itself against the Communist threat. Contrary to popular thinking, America did not exert pressure on Germany to pay restitution to Israel. Also, many of the political figures in Adenauer's own party, the Christian Democratic Union, did not regard restitution payment as an issue of high priority.

German-Israeli relations over the years have been subject to the conflicting pressures of guilt versus the return to normalcy. This explains the unique nature of these relations and the conflicts resulting from the different perspectives of the partners. Wolffsohn deals with the most important ones: the conflict concerning German rocket experts whose activities in Egypt constituted a threat to Israel's security; Germany's refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Israel because that would endanger Germany's reunification policy and its "traditional" friendship with the Arab world.

Diplomatic relations were finally established in 1965, by Adenauer's successor, Ludwig Erhard, against strong opposition from those in charge of foreign policy. And as for the traditional friendship with the Arabs, Wolffsohn exposes it for what it was — something with roots in the Nazi era when many Arab leaders were enthusiastic Nazi supporters.

On the other hand, the secret military alliance between Germany and Israel, which supplied Israel with German arms, was the outcome of the "policy of history" based on the desire for stonement upheld by Adenauer, who staunchly refused to bow to American pressure to suspend restitution payments until Israel complied with American demands after the Sinai Campaign.

Wolffsohn deals astutely with the issue of role reversal between Germans and Israelis. Whereas during the first phase of relations, Israeli politicians and intellectuals assumed a moralizing role vis-à-vis the Germans, demanding that they renounce their Nazi past and prove their commitment to democracy, this changed during the 1970s and '80s, when a considerable sector of German public opinion chose to

regard itself as a judge of Israel's use of force against the Palestinians, denouncing the evils of military occupation.

His interpretation of this divergence of attitudes is based on lessons drawn from history and sounds convincing: "The Germans have recognized that resorting to violence can lead to catastrophe, for themselves as well as for others. The experience of the Jews and the Israelis is that non-violence and defenselessness can mean death."

He criticizes the assumption of moral superiority on the part of Israelis over their German contemporaries and their tendency to hold them responsible for the sins of their fathers, and shows understanding for German resentment against such attitudes. On the other hand he accuses the "good Germans" — leftists, environmentalists and the Evangelical church — of following a selective moral code in condemning the Gulf War. These good people shed tears over the Jews killed in 1938, "but studiously ignored the danger to the living Jews in Israel," after doing the same with respect to the atrocities committed by Saddam Hussein against Iranian soldiers and Kurds.

Although he regards Adenauer's victory against his opponents on the restitution issue as a triumph of the politics of history (*Geschichtspolitik*), he displays a critical attitude with regard to the function of the Holocaust in Jewish-Israeli identity and as an instrument wielded by Israeli politicians to win arguments with the German government. He warns against the danger of trivialization resulting from such excessive use, but even more against the substitution of identification with the Holocaust for genuine Jewish content in Jewish-Israeli identity.

The fixation on the Holocaust and on Germany in this connection he sees as a break with the religious traditions of Judaism, according to which Jewish suffering is a continuous chain with the Holocaust as one link among many. It seems that here he accepts, consciously or not, the standpoint of the ultra-Orthodox

sector of Jewish society.

FINALLY, but not least important, is the sensitive issue of German-Jewish identity, which is riddled with contradictions that Wolffsohn himself cannot avoid. He dwells at length on the spiritual affliction of Jews living in a Germany where they do not feel at home and with which they cannot identify. He quotes research data showing that 77 percent of German Jews and 100 percent of Jews of Eastern European background felt no love of their country, and these attitudes continued into the second generation.

Then again, German Jews have the highest rate of intermarriage; in a survey conducted in 1990, more than 66 percent agreed with the statement that "Despite being part of Jewish culture, German Jews are still Germans first."

These contradictions are hard to resolve, and indeed Wolffsohn himself seems to vacillate between them. At one point he argues that German Jews regard themselves as second-generation Holocaust survivors, an attitude which leads to increased tensions with their non-Jewish countrymen, while elsewhere he states that "the second generation indicates a new type of German Jew, more conscious of Jewish heritage and thus both more self-conscious and self-confident." And strangely enough, he attributes this to the arrival of Jews from Russia, as if these refugees, devoid of any Jewish tradition and identification, could be the harbingers of such a desirable change.

The author does not offer any convincing arguments that German Jews can escape the problem of living as strangers in the land of plenty, with very little Jewish content in their lives and all the psychological damage involved, and avoid assimilating into German society and losing their Jewish identity altogether. Wolffsohn himself, inadvertently perhaps, confirms this failure by stating that efforts of some German-Jewish intellectuals to act as intermediaries between Germany and Israel have proved a dismal failure.

Viewing the issue from a German perspective, he deals with the images of the Jew in German culture, drawing attention to the fact that extreme vilification, as manifested in *Der Stürmer*, is being substituted by idealized images of Jews with no shortcomings. In the tradition of "Nathan the Wise" of the Enlightenment.

Admittedly these images are far removed from reality and people are aware of this discrepancy, but leaders of public opinion think it necessary to propagate them in order to combat the distorted images that led to such terrible atrocities in the past. Wolffsohn regards this as dangerous and apt to "lead to a build-up of pressures that will eventually break out, all at once, in a massive storm."

This is correct, no doubt, but it also recalls some of the age-old fears of the Diaspora Jew from which we, as Israelis, are exempt.

It's a thought-provoking book, well written, soundly researched and courageous in the sense that the author attempts to deal with all relevant issues, even the most troublesome ones. And if the answers he provides are not always satisfactory, it is through no fault of his, but only because of their insoluble nature.

'Arc' Submissions

The Israel Association of Writers in English is accepting poems and short stories for the 11th issue of *Arc* magazine, scheduled to be published in December. A maximum of six poems or six pages for short stories will be considered for publication. The deadline for submissions is September 30. To receive a reply, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to The Israel Association of Writers in English, POB 39385 Tel Aviv 61393.

IN BRIEF

FABLES FOR ALL AGES

by Frieda Clark Hyman, illustrated by Judith Cohen Margolis. Jerusalem, Gefen Publishing House. 231 pp. Price not stated.

In these so-called fables, birds of Eden Forest are taught Torah by Gaffer, an arthritic robin.

When characters with alliterative names like Batya Bobolnik and Akiba Albatross bring him their problems, he gives them a heavy dose of Yiddishkeit, with stories from the Bible, and lessons from the *siddur* and the Ethics of the Fathers. All to point up a moral, of course.

In the hands of a skillful writer, the formula might have worked. But Hyman's stilted English and long-winded conversations may well be too heavy for the average youngster.

For adults, using a bird to teach Torah is plain cuckoo.

The cover jacket suggests that Hyman has written these stories in the tradition of Aesop and Grimm. An educator should know that a fable is a story tersely told. Aesop's were usually a paragraph or two long, ending with an epigram; teacher Hyman's often run on for more than 20 pages. The Grimm brothers collected fairy tales.

Had the author followed Aesop's brevity and emulated the Grimm method of storytelling, she might have produced something that could fly better than a turkey.

As it is, parents might find the book best used for getting their kids to sleep quickly at night.

Judith Cohen Margolis relieves the monotony with delightful illustrations. Her cover painting of the Solomonite robin is worthy of framing for a child's room.

Marlin Levin

SECRETS OF THE NIGHT SKY by Bob Berman. New York, William Morrow. 320pp. \$23.

One of my favorite *New Yorker* cartoons depicts a father blithely pointing out objects in the night sky to his two small children, one of whom is whispering to the other, "That's not what Carl Sagan said."

One of the weariest aspects of being a parent is being constantly asked to supply answers to questions beyond one's ken.

What is worse, many of us think we know the answers when we really don't.

If you are flummoxed by constant questioning about the moon, planets, stars, constellations, galaxies, black holes, comets, meteorites, eclipses, solstices, satellite launchings, celestial navigation or even the oddities of space-time, then this is the book for you.

Couched in terms even a parent can understand, it is also partially written in the big vernacular accessible to every child who watches TV. But it's written for adults, not children.

Author Berman, director of an observatory at Woodstock NY, writes a column for *Discover* magazine and has a weekly spot on radio.

He has a particular knack for illuminating subjects you thought you knew everything about, like black holes. He vividly sums them up as problems of escape velocities and explains why.

He is also capable of describing a red giant as a star with an aging problem, and has a knack for dramatizing a universe anyway filled with wonder.

This excellent and entertainingly presented book (taking a chapter at a time with your children would make a wonderful project) is also replete with illustrations and diagrams. Five stars.

Meir Ronnen

Priapus Ex Machina

EDMUND WILSON: A Biography by Jeffrey Meyers. New York, Houghton Mifflin. 554 pp. \$35.

By Owen McNally



Edmond Wilson, one of America's most eminent men of letters and long-reigning intellectual grandees before his death at 77 in 1972, had four prime pursuits in life: writing, reading, boozing and fornicating.

Perhaps magic — a lifelong avocation for the workaholic critic, biographer, novelist, memoirist, historian, poet, playwright and journalist — could be included as a far distant fifth.

Jeffrey Meyers's *Edmund Wilson: A Biography* lets us know that not many fifths — most particularly fifths of Johnny Walker Red — were ever too distant from the shy, pudgy, bulldog-faced author's right hand after a hard day's labor of writing and researching among his beloved books.

Meyers's biography is a commendably thorough, often entertaining, even fascinating yet ultimately not quite satisfying observance of the centennial of Wilson's birth. It details Wilson's accomplishments and flaws, including his overgenerous reviews for cronies and his raves to gain sexual favors from the alluring Anais Nin, a writer noted for her erotic diaries.

Meyers recounts Wilson's life from his privileged yet loveless boyhood on through his Rabelaisian drinking habits and tumultuous sex life, his nervous breakdown, his war with the IRS and literary scrap with old friend Vladimir Nabokov. There's the batting order of mistresses, wives and latter-day lovers, including Elaine May of Nichols and May fame and writer Penelope Gilliat, 37 years of his junior. And, of course there's a close-up of his erotic, Punch and Judy marriage with the writer Mary McCarthy, 17 years his junior.

Unfortunately, many readers will come away from the book with an overwhelming image of Wilson as a sex machine rather

than a writing machine. But he was both.

Wilson, of course, brought this image on himself with his memoirs containing meticulous accounts of his sexual encounters. He was obsessed with writing clinical descriptions of his partner's genitalia, mixed with braggadocio about his virtuosic skills in the sack.

Wilson was initiated into the joys of sex at 25 by the flamboyant poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. Millay was a bisexual sex athlete who, Meyers writes, "seemed willing to sleep with everybody." Millay, whose romantic poetry Wilson lauded, transformed the repressed Bohemian wannabe into what Meyers calls "one of the great literary fornicators of all time." Meyers mires about in Wilson's foot fetishism. Evidently, the great writer had as much of a weakness for a well-turned ankle as he did for a well-turned phrase.

Everything you never wanted to know about Wilson's sex life is bared here. But

is our understanding of him increased one iota by knowing that this aging priapus prince of American literature was still having wet dreams while in his 50s? Meyers's stream of "Hard Copy"-like facts drowns out the magic that resides in Wilson's lucid, forceful prose and in his dazzling ability to make abstract ideas, distant eras and cultural and literary figures spring to life.

Whether Wilson is casting new light on Charles Dickens or Rudyard Kipling or providing a key to understanding then-new kids on the block such as T.S. Eliot or James Joyce, his writing is the antithesis of the pedantry prized in the groves of academe.

Although modernism was a key part of his bent, he seemed like a Victorian literary luminary whose holy mission was to make readers want to read and think deeply about books and ideas.

(The Hartford Courant)

Endangered Fiction

WHILE THE MESSIAH TARRIES by Melvin Jules Bukiet. New York, Harcourt Brace. 197 pp. \$20.

By S.T. Meravi

Some three years ago Schocken brought out a rather hefty anthology called *Writing Our Way Home*, which attempted to demonstrate that American-Jewish fiction was flowering anew. It was a dubious proposition at best, and was hardly helped by the fact that the anthology's only memorable stories were by such hardy warhorses as Malamud, Bellow and Roth.

Younger writers of American-Jewish stories face two problems. First, they must be able to ground their fiction in authentic Jewish-American experience, and it comes as no news that, in many ways, that has become increasingly difficult to do. Second, and hardly unrelated to the first problem, is that the audience for Jewish-American fiction has become an endangered species. By any measure the number of American Jews interested in (a) matters Jewish or (b) reading fiction is not heartening.

Simply endorsing the notion of Jewish-American fiction isn't sufficient. A case in point is *While the Messiah Taries*, the latest collection of stories by Melvin Jules

Bukiet. I haven't read Bukiet's earlier collection, *Stories of an Imaginary Childhood*, or his novel, *Sandman's Dust*. But if *Messiah* is anything to go by, I fear the once robust genre of American-Jewish fiction is suffering from acute anemia.

Since seven of the nine stories here have apparently not been published before, we may well be dealing with a case of a writer emptying out his desk drawers. That might explain the bumpy boxcar sentences, the clichés (the face "red as a brick"), and the awkward vocabulary ("disattach" rather than the plebeian detach). More troubling is the fact that Bukiet is the fiction editor of *Tikkun*. If this is what we're up against, we may worry not only about the state of American-Jewish fiction, but the state of American Jewry itself.

The main problem is the odor of the ersatz that permeates each of these stories. Everything is contrived and manipulated. The characters consistently have no inner lives; they simply exist to make some point that the Jewish reader presumably will approve — usually having something to do with a miraculous rediscovery of Jewish identity. Each story has a dollop of Jewish content, but only to the degree that suggests cribbing from *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. Most of the plots evolve from the realm of magic realism, but everything is so lacking in authenticity that the result is neither magical nor realistic.

Nor is the reader likely to be swept

away by the apocalyptic endings that most of the stories feature. In one, an archeologist turns mad desert prophet. In another, a New York gem dealer falls victim to a woman murderously hungry for Manhattan real estate. In a third, a college student builds a model of Jerusalem and at his miniature Temple Mount witnesses the death of a professor and the near-crucifixion of his Christian girlfriend. In yet another, a crooked *shoet* sleeps with a mysterious red-haired woman and goes up in flames. In still another, a rabbi makes a pact with the devil and sends the devil up in flames.

All this would merely be tiresome, but the last two stories are downright offensive. Both are based on the Holocaust. "Himmeler's Chickens" concerns a Jew obsessed with acquiring a home movie of Himmler murdering poultry. Enough said. "The Library of Moloch" deals with the videotaping of survivors' testimony. This story not only suggests that God is the eternal enemy of the Jews, but adds this extraordinary assertion from a former camp inmate:

"You know, the killers never understood us either. 'How,' they asked themselves, 'can these people meet our eyes? How can they persevere no matter the punishment we inflict?' Mind you, they were sophisticated; they knew that it was not merely the scourging of the body of the community, but the anguish of being compelled to acknowledge that animals like them shared the same cruel flesh we did."

And then — surprise, surprise — the video library goes up in flames.

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Love Story

THE POMEGRANATE PENDANT by Dvora Waysman. Jerusalem, Feldheim. 217 pp. Price not stated.

By Reuven Ben Dov

I was fourteen when abba called me to his tiny workroom at the back of the house. With these opening words, we are catapulted back in time and space to the Yemen in 1880.

When you read this beautiful story, you should settle down in your favorite armchair for a journey of adventure, poetry, learning and exhilaration. It is really a love story of Jerusalem disguised as the autobiography of a Yemenite girl. Our heroine is asked by her father to marry his apprentice goldsmith and then move to the Holy Land. She agrees and we follow her life and that of four generations of her family, mainly in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem.

What was the pomegranate pendant? When Mazal married Ezra, he gave her a beautiful piece of jewelry he had fashioned. After the difficult journey by foot, boat, and donkey to Jerusalem, sleeping initially in the study hall of the Hurva synagogue, they managed to purchase a little house just outside Dung Gate. Here they sold their Yemenite jewelry, and eventually named the shop "The Pomegranate Pendant." At every henna ceremony of her daughters and their daughters and their daughters, Mazal placed the pendant round their necks as a blessing to have many children.

Not only did this story prevent me from doing anything else till I had finished it, but I closed the book reluctantly; I did not want the spell to be broken. Fact and fiction effortlessly merge together, allowing us a bird's eye view of some elements of Zionist history. We learn about the fresh baking of matzo every day of Pessah in the Yemen, the harshness of life in the Old City, the effect of the Balfour Declaration, the massacre in Hebron in 1929, the flight against the British, the siege of Jerusalem, and the establishment of the State.

Moving in and out of the novel are familiar names like Dr. Meir Wallach, the first director of Shaare Zedek, Ronald Storrs, the British military governor of Jerusalem, and Rav Kook, the chief rabbi of Palestine.

How can an Ashkenazi Australian middle-aged mother of four almost dybbuk-like mouth the words of a Yemenite teenage bride? Such is the craft of a professional like Dvora Waysman, a widely syndicated Jerusalem freelance writer who also organizes creative workshops for aspiring writers. This is her first novel.

If your soul does not resonate with the beauty and holiness of Jerusalem, then this book is not for you. But if it does, you will sometimes cry with happiness, and sometimes with sorrow. This is not a blockbuster family saga that requires memorizing numerous names and following different sub-plots. Instead, we can effortlessly enjoy a simple story of the life of one individual and her family as they fight the challenges and enjoy the good times of life in Jerusalem. The feel of this novel can be gauged from its final paragraph. The 90-year-old great-great-grandmother says:

"I looked up through the branches and saw the stars shimmering like a million diamonds, the moon golden like my pomegranate pendant. I listened to the wind sighing in the fig trees that pointed like sentinels towards heaven. I inhaled the fragrance of a magnolia tree in the garden and rosemary, basil and thyme wafting down from the Judean hills. I stooped and took a handful of soil and let it run between my fingers. I was saying goodbye to Jerusalem and had used all my senses but one, in this silent dialogue with the city I loved. I hoped that Paradise would look like Jerusalem. And then I tasted it—the salt of the tears that were slowly trickling from my eyes."



Meir Wieseltier

READING FROM RIGHT TO LEFT

BY JEFF GREEN

Those of us whose native language is not Hebrew might feel intimidated by Israeli poetry. How can we understand the high style, if we have trouble getting through a simple newspaper article?

Nevertheless, poetry is a good place to start reading Hebrew literature, for it is vocalized, removing one significant stumbling block for learners. Poetry is also meant to be read slowly and carefully, so a beginner might actually find more in it than someone whose eyes go through it too fast. Finally, poems are usually short, so one doesn't face the daunting feeling that one will never be able to finish a whole work.

During the past few months I have received more than a dozen volumes of poetry. I kept meaning to get to them, but they always seemed less urgent than the other books—less perhaps symptomatic of our culture's attitude toward poetry.

To help combat that attitude, last spring an International Poets' Festival took place in Jerusalem. Shortly afterward an attractive volume of the poems read at it appeared, edited by Helti Yeshurun and published by Mishkenot Sha'ananim, where the festival was held. For those wishing to test the waters of Hebrew poetry, this volume provides an excellent jumping-in point.

Some of the best contemporary Israeli poets are represented, including Lea Ayalon, Meir Wieseltier, Dahlia Ravikovitch and Natan Zach. To make things even easier for English speakers, the poems are also well translated. All the other poetry is published in its original language—including Japanese, Greek, Arabic, Russian, and, of course, English—with a facing Hebrew translation.

FIVE POEMS by Ravikovitch, a highly

regarded poet, appear in this volume, and now Hakibbutz Hameuhad has brought out *Kol Hashirim Ad Ko* ("The Complete Poems So Far"), making available the six books of poetry she has published since 1961.

Ravikovitch appears to be an accessible poet. Her language is superficially quite simple, and she eases us into her poems gently. Then, when our guard is down, she ambushes us. Take, for example, "A King Over Israel," from a volume first published in 1978. The first stanza is vivid and engaging, posing no apparent problem: "Always in the back seat of the car/ And the sky as dry as a field of thorns/ I couldn't find rest for my eyes/ From the end of the sky to its end." But the second stanza confronts us with a disconcerting and original image: "White nights/ They're wicked like the face of an animal/ Baring its teeth at a bush in the desert."

Her poetry stimulates you and jolts you out of your comfortable and predictable habits of mind, making you see more in life than you saw before, sometimes things you might have preferred to deny or suppress.

For some readers of poetry, formal qualities—patterns of sound and rhythm, imagery, structure—are paramount, enabling them to enjoy a poem no matter what it is "about." That kind of reader, I believe, is relatively rare. Otherwise, poetry would be much more popular. Most readers, including myself, are drawn to works because of their subject matter, and who could be so coldhearted as not to take an interest in a love story?

THE POEMS by Yaira Ginosar in her latest collection, *Hayot Meir He'ara* ("Beauty Remarks"), published by Hakibbutz Hameuhad, can almost be read as a novel about a love affair between a woman and a much younger man: "But Shahar is my son, I tried to smile, and you're his age/ Almost." "That's how you came to me/ From the land of maturing youth/ Bending a bashful head, prepared/ Signaling that you're the chosen." She acknowledges the hopelessness of her situation: "In a moment I understand that you're just a warm temptation/ In a moment I understand that I'm just a fool."

The poems follow the relationship through its joys and pains till its end: "There was no poem between us, we weren't a picture/ There was no frame to protect us/ There is no frame to protect us/

We were an obsessive pair of hands."

MALKA NATANSON'S poems, *Uchmanot Begehem* ("Blackberries in Rain"), published by *Itan 77*, do not form a cycle around a single story. Many of them, however, deal with dreadful events, such as the massacre at Babi Yar, the Holocaust, or the genocide in Rwanda.

She is aware that these subjects must be treated with tact: "How will I touch the torments that have no limit/ How will I break through an underworld that isn't mine/ And I just a wayfarer in the corridors of your scream." She achieves powerful effects by understatement: "At a distance of a hundred meters the children played war games/ And my little brothers kept sitting on the empty bed with swollen bellies."

She writes about what is presented as personal experience: "Take the woman out of yourself/ Have her dance to the candlelight/ It's the sixth day of the week." And she also projects her imagination onto others: "Fatima soothes the pains of her kneeling/ With yellowed verses from the Koran/ And the contortion of her exploding womb/ With soft, holy fingers/ Like a virgin on her master's bed."

RAHEL CHALFI'S poetry in *Ahavat Hadrakon* ("Love of the Dragon"), published by Hakibbutz Hameuhad, is more abundant in its use of language, reaching for an incantatory quality that appears to be untrammelled by intellect and open to unconscious process, following itself through surprising twists and turns to unexpected destinations.

Chalfi is not afraid to use humor in her poetry. Look, for example, at the first two stanzas of a poem called, "Love of Treas," in which she pictures herself acting strangely: "I, who lack/ Ancient calm/ Find myself hungry near them/ Like a child lacking calcium who suddenly starts/ To nibble plaster from walls/ I open arms and hug them/ Press my body so close to/ Their thick, quiet trunks/ From my forehead to/ My toes/ To swallow within me and absorb inside me/ Their secret."

I especially liked a long poem called "German Boot." It tells the story of a girl student with big feet. Unable to find boots that fit her ("I was in Paris last summer and didn't find/ Boots in my size/ I found a lover/ Discreet and courteous, but not boots to fit me"), she suffers through the Jerusalem winter in summer shoes until she spots a pair of boots in a store window.

They are ideal but made in Germany. After two hours of inner debate, she buys them. They are soft and warm and make her look sexy, but as she walks, they seem to fill up with blood. Whose blood? Surrealistically, when she wants to go to bed with her lover, he cannot remove the boots except by tearing them off: "And the profane angels in heaven/ Cry out holy holy/ And my legs/ Are red/ With shame."

RENA LEE is an Israeli professor of Hebrew literature who has lived and taught in America for many years. She frequently returns on visits and has published a constant flow of poetry, fiction and literary criticism in Hebrew.

Her most recent book of poems, *Harhek Mipak Hatikva Hatova* ("Far from the Cape of Good Hope"), published by Reshafim, expresses some of the indelible strangeness of living abroad: "Indeed, even in my sleep arises/ The taste of my loneliness in this city/ That conspires against me to pluck out my roots."

Other poems mourn the death of her parents, such as an evocation of her father's fine suit, which someone else is certainly wearing now. She also meditates on her own aging: "So I'll never ask again, like the late Blalik, where my youth is/ I know that it's somewhere in all my yesterday's/ Floating in the universe on distant rays of light/ (A bit likeimps of the light, but not the same)."

Not an obscure poet, Lee writes rich and sonorous Hebrew that is a pleasure to read.

They call themselves office supply superstores. For nearly 11 months a year, their main customers are business firms. But in midsum-

mer they must prepare for an onslaught of schoolchildren and their parents.

These office supply stores are going after the back-to-school trade in a big way, competing fiercely with one another as well as with the traditional neighborhood stationery shops, and with the department stores, Hamashbir Lazarchan and Shekem.

The big-time players are Office Depot, Super Office, Graffiti, and Stock Center, which is part of the veteran Kravitz writing-supplies chain.

Super Office, Stock Center and Kravitz have gone into the textbook field for the first time this year.

You couldn't let elementary schoolchildren go to most of these stores by themselves. The stores tend to be large and overwhelming, and most of them are located in suburban shopping malls. They feature nonstop shopping from early morning to late evening, some till 10 or 11 p.m.

The office superstores claim you can realize savings as great as 40 to 60 percent, compared to shopping in ordinary shops. This is hard to judge. Some of the very tempting back-to-school offers advertised by the office superstores are undoubtedly "loss leaders"—items on which no profit is made.

Gimmicks have been added to the lure of low prices. Super Office is raffling off a South Korean car, a Hyundai Accent, to customers spending NIS 95 or more. And at all four branches of the Graffiti chain, a lucky shopper will win back the full price of his or her shopping basket every week.

So who are these office supply giants, and what are they doing for back-to-school?

OFFICE DEPOT, a franchise of an American chain of the same name, is the most imposing of the office superstores, and has branches in Tel Aviv and Haifa thus far. All Office Depot's fittings were brought from the US.

To the average schoolchild, these huge American copycat stores must appear intimidating indeed, with floor-to-ceiling warehouse-style shelves filled with everything from television sets to fax paper.

However, for its back-to-school season, Office Depot has given over its main aisles to products for school pupils. This includes merchandise which Office Depot does not normally stock, such as notebooks and school diaries with the current "in" images—Power Rangers, Pocahontas, emcee-actress-singer Michal Yarnai, actor-model Lior Miller, and so forth.

Basic items like notebooks, pencils, erasers, even small metal pencil sharpeners are packaged in multi-packs. That's one reason the unit prices are significantly less than at ordinary paper-goods shops. Office Depot, for instance, is selling five erasers for NIS 1.49, five metal pencil sharpeners for NIS 3.45, and a pack of 20 brown-cover notebooks, 16 pages each, for NIS 7.49.

Of course, one child may not need or want five identical erasers or five pencil sharpeners. On the other hand, many items are sold individually—children's scissors for a mere NIS 1.15, for example.

Office Depot has come out with a mini-catalog, distributed with the Super-Pharm ads in some of the Hebrew weekly papers and at Super-Pharm branches. Consumers can order from 120 back-to-school items by phone or fax for home delivery. They can also qualify for attractive two-for-the-price-of-one offers at Office Depot, if they spend NIS 75 at Super-Pharm.

For the back-to-school season, Office Depot and its local arch-rival Super Office are engaged in a war of one-upmanship on their "lowest price" promises.

First Super Office announced that if a customer finds an identical back-to-school item cheaper in another catalog or shop, Super Office would match the price and

Back to School



Textbooks are the latest attraction at office superstores.

Office supply superstores are competing hard to prepare pupils for the coming school year.

By Martha Meisels

deduct another 50 percent of the difference. In other words, if you find something for NIS 9 which Super Office sells for NIS 10, it will reduce its price to NIS 8.50—or refund you the difference, if you've already bought it.

In response, Office Depot says it will do the same—but deduct 60 percent of the differential. (At both chains, the maximum refund is NIS 150.) The rival superstores will expect to see a catalog or advertisement as proof of the lower price elsewhere, but may satisfy themselves with a phone call to confirm your claim.

Often, however, you won't find identical merchandise.

Take basic yellow lead pencils with erasers, for instance. The cheapest I saw were at the Tel Aviv branch of Stock Center (the Kravitz affiliate), where 12 pencils from China go for NIS 1.40. Elsewhere in the Kravitz chain these are NIS 1.99 for a dozen, or 25 agorot apiece.

Super Office sells a package of 10 pencils for NIS 1.93. They are also made in China, but carry the Mead brand name from the US.

Office Depot, which claims to be cheaper than its rivals, does not stock pencils from China on the grounds of quality considerations. Its rock-bottom offer is a package of 12 American-made Dixon yellow pencils for NIS 3.49.

A manager at a Stock Center branch admitted to me that its very cheap pencils

Office Depot, if only because its stores aren't as huge.

Not only is it offering a large selection of back-to-school merchandise at attractive prices, Super Office is also selling textbooks this year—in an effort to offer one-stop shopping.

In fact, you don't even have to stop. You can phone or fax a list of required textbooks from home, and have them delivered without charge, if the bill is over NIS 95. Harstein says that Super Office should have most textbooks in stock. Prices will be the official ones controlled by the Ministry of Education.

Among the low prices about which Super Office brags are NIS 1.99 for a pupil's diary, NIS 1.11 for a pencil sharpener with a holder for the shavings, NIS 2.22 for a jeans-style pencil case, and NIS 19.95 for a generous kit full of pencils, crayons and felt-tip markers.

Many parents will be glad that, based on its experience last year, Super Office has scaled down the quantities of items prepackaged together. For instance, stick pens which had been in multi-packs of 12 now come in threes.

KRAVITZ, THE country's veteran paper supplies chain, is about to celebrate its 70th anniversary. It has 60 shops stretching from Galilee to Eilat.

Three of these are called Stock Center, and they are Kravitz's answer to the office superstores. They are located in Tel Aviv, at 107 Hahashmona'im (almost next door to Super Office); in Rishon LeZion in the Kol mall; and in Haifa, at the Kiryat Aza Junction.

Kravitz's marketing manager, Dudi Oren, says you may find some better prices at Stock Center than at Kravitz if you're buying in multi-packs, but he didn't estimate percentages of savings.

He says there will be attractive back-to-school prices at all Kravitz shops too. In a number of shopping malls, Kravitz is holding back-to-school fairs, which either began last Saturday evening or will open tomorrow evening. These will be in the Beersheba mall, the Lev mall in Ashdod, Kanyoter in Ness Ziona, the Hazahav mall in Rishon LeZion, Hasharon in Netanya, the Arim mall in Kfar Sava and Kan-Or in Or Yehuda.

At the these fairs and at the Stock Center in Rishon, Kravitz will sell schoolbooks for the first time this year.

Oren also says that Kravitz has more to offer than the office superstores when it comes to specialty goods such as supplies for art students.

As for prices, he says that "without doubt, we can compete with Super Office and Office Depot." He also promises giveaway gifts for pupils and parents, without a raffle.

GRAFFITI is another of the office supply stores throwing its doors open to a younger clientele this season. It is the only office superstore in Jerusalem, at 39 Pierre Koenig, Talpiot. Its other stores are in Tel Aviv (17-19 Haharzel, Ramat Hahayal), Haifa (Nesher, 147 Derech Bar-Yehuda), and Beersheba (Ha'oranim, opposite the railway warehouses).

Graffiti is promoting two package-deal back-to-school baskets. One for the lower grades contains 20 items, including an "orthopedic schoolbag," at NIS 128.50; the other, for older pupils, has 23 items at NIS 150. It claims buying these package deals can represent savings of "up to 60%."

Even if true, I can't imagine pupils or parents wanting to buy a pre-packaged back-to-school "basket," rather than choosing the individual items which they need or want. That's the fun in back-to-school shopping.

Pesto, Pistou, Pronto!



One of the most inspired inventions of Italian cuisine is pasta with pesto, a sauce made of fresh basil, garlic, nuts, Parmesan cheese and olive oil. With basil so widely available and reasonably priced during this season, it's the ideal time to enjoy fresh homemade pesto. Busting with zesty flavor, pesto is ready in a few minutes and requires no cooking.

Pesto also flavors many versions of minestrone, the famous Italian vegetable soup. The pesto is stirred in at the last minute, so the fresh basil and garlic flavors remain lively.

Not to be outdone, the French have their version of pesto, called pistou. It's a specialty of Provence in southern France, which has a strong Italian influence on its culinary style. This French cousin is simpler—it does not contain nuts and not necessarily cheese either. Actually, either pistou or pesto can be made without cheese for a kosher accompaniment for meat or poultry.

Today pesto is so popular that it is being used in many additional creative ways. The delectable, deep-green sauce is wonderful with turkey and chicken, both in cold salads and in hot dishes. Trendy restaurants offer sandwiches of roast chicken with fresh pesto instead of the standard chicken with mayonnaise.

There are also many new pesto recipes. You can find menus featuring coriander pesto, mint pesto and chili pesto, all made by blending an herb or spice with oil and, usually, garlic.

Whatever you call it, dishes made with fresh basil liven up classic and contemporary meals.

By Faye Levy

A variation I came up with is avocado pesto flavored with basil, parsley and garlic. Avocado gives the pesto a cool, pale green color and creamy texture, which makes pesto even more versatile. It is delicious as a spread on bread or for canapé-topped appetizers, topped with strips of smoked salmon or roasted red bell pepper.

You can also serve it as a dip surrounded by an assortment of fresh vegetables—zucchini sticks, small cauliflower florets, sweet pepper strips, cucumber slices and radishes, for example. It also makes a tasty accompaniment for rice and beans.

Like classic pesto, avocado pesto is great with pasta, and contributes lusciousness similar to that of heavy cream. You can use your imagination and add ingredients from your pantry or refrigerator to prepare tasty pesto-pasta dishes.

Diced fresh tomatoes are a perfect addition, as are toasted pine nuts. If you like, cook some strips of summer squash and sweet red or orange peppers with the pasta for a colorful dish redolent of summer flavors.

The time-honored way to prepare pesto is with a mortar and pestle. Today pesto is prepared in seconds with the aid of a food processor.

CLASSIC PESTO

1 cup packed basil leaves (1 bunch of about 30 gr.)
2 medium garlic cloves, peeled
2 Tbsp. pine nuts or walnuts
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (about 45 gr.)
1/3 cup fine quality olive oil, preferably extra virgin

With blade of food processor turning, drop garlic cloves, one at a time, through feed tube and process until finely chopped. Add pine nuts, basil leaves and cheese and process until basil is chopped. With blade turning, gradually add olive oil.

Scrape down sides and process until mixture is well blended. Transfer to a small bowl and set aside. (Pesto can be kept, covered, 2 days in refrigerator. Bring to room temperature before using.) Makes about 2/3 cup.

LINGUINE WITH MUSHROOMS, PESTO AND TOMATOES

Here the traditional pasta-pesto pair is embellished with mushrooms and tomatoes and garnished with toasted nuts, which highlight the flavor of the pesto.

Classic Pesto (see recipe above)
3 Tbsp. silvered almonds or pine nuts
225 gr. small ripe tomatoes
3 Tbsp. olive oil
100 gr. mushrooms, halved, sliced thin
1/2 tsp. dried leaf basil, crumbled
salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
225 gr. dried linguine
fresh basil sprigs (for garnish)
bowl of freshly grated Parmesan cheese (for serving)

Preheat oven or toaster oven to 175°C. Toast nuts on a small baking sheet in oven until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Transfer nuts to a plate and let them cool. Cut tomatoes in half lengthwise, squeeze well and remove seeds. Cut each piece in four, lengthwise. Set aside.

Heat 2 Tbsp. oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add mushrooms, dried basil, salt and pepper and sauté, stirring, about 3 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove mushrooms to a plate. Add 1 Tbsp. oil to skillet and heat over medium-high heat. Add tomato pieces and sauté about 30 seconds or until just heated through. Transfer to a plate.

Cook linguine uncovered in a large pot of boiling salted water over high heat, separating strands occasionally with a fork, about 8 minutes or until tender but firm to the bite. Drain well and transfer to a heated serving bowl.

Add 1/2 cup pesto and toss. Add mushrooms and tomatoes and toss again. Taste and adjust seasoning. Sprinkle with toasted pine nuts. Garnish with basil sprigs. Serve immediately, with more cheese and remaining pesto separately.

Makes 4-6 first-course or 2-3 main-course servings.

LIGHTER PESTO

This light, flavorful version of pesto contains only a modest amount of olive oil and no cheese. It is a perfect accompaniment for meat or poultry.

2 large garlic cloves, peeled
2 Tbsp. pine nuts or walnuts
1 cup packed basil leaves (1 bunch of about 30 gr.)
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

With blade of food processor turning, drop garlic cloves, one at a time, through feed tube and process until finely chopped. Add nuts and basil and process until basil is chopped.

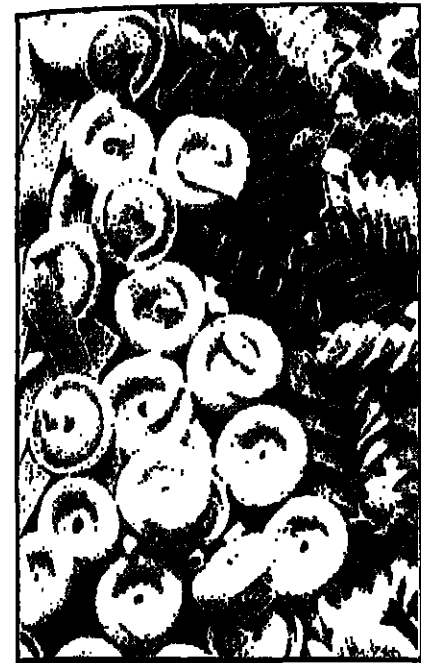
With blade turning, gradually add olive oil. Scrape down sides and process until mixture is well blended. Transfer to a small bowl and set aside. (Pesto can be kept, covered, 2 days in refrigerator. Bring to room temperature before using.) Makes about 1/3 cup.

TURKEY BREASTS WITH PESTO AND POTATOES

When I was in the northern Italian port city of Genoa, I tasted the classic Genoese *pasta al pesto*, which also contains potato slices mixed with the pasta (although it rarely contains potato outside Italy). I have loved the combination of potatoes and pesto ever since. It was the inspiration for this main course, in which the potatoes and pesto are partnered with turkey and zucchini. Ripe cherry tomatoes make a colorful accompaniment.

Lighter Pesto (see recipe above)
3/4-1 kg. small potatoes, unpeeled
500 gr. turkey breast slices (about 6mm. thick), patted dry
3 Tbsp. olive oil or vegetable oil
salt and freshly ground pepper
500 gr. yellow or green zucchini, sliced 6mm. thick

Cover potatoes with water in saucepan, add salt and bring to a boil. Simmer until



just tender, about 25 minutes. Remove from water. Cut in thick slices. Cover and keep warm.

Cut each turkey slice in 6 or 8 pieces, each with about 5-cm. sides. Put on paper towel-lined plate. Heat oil in large heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Sprinkle turkey with salt and pepper.

Add half of turkey to pan and sauté, stirring often, about 1 minute per side, just until color changes throughout; cut a piece to check. Transfer turkey to bowl and keep warm. Repeat with remaining turkey. Add zucchini slices to pan, sprinkle with salt and pepper and sauté 3 minutes or until just tender.

Add about half of pesto to turkey and mix gently. Serve with potatoes and zucchini. Serve remaining pesto separately, for spooning on vegetables. Makes 4 servings.

PISTOU

Pistou is popular in southern France as an addition to vegetable soups and for tossing with pasta. It also makes a delicious flavoring for vegetables—fresh and dried beans, corn, potatoes, and even mixed frozen vegetables.

2 bunches basil (about 60 gr. or 2 cups), leaves only
6 large garlic cloves
1/2-1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (optional)
1/3-1/2 cup fine quality olive oil, preferably extra virgin
freshly ground pepper to taste

Rinse basil and pat dry. Chop garlic in a food processor. Add basil and cheese and chop finely. Gradually add olive oil, with motor running. Scrape down sides and puree again so mixture is well blended. Add freshly ground pepper.

Transfer to a small bowl and set aside. (Pistou can be kept, covered, 2 days in refrigerator. Bring to room temperature before using.) Makes about 1/3-1 cup (depending on whether you add cheese).

PROVENÇAL VEGETABLE SOUP WITH PISTOU

(Soupe au pistou)

Fresh basil is the essential ingredient in pistou and thus makes this soup primarily

a summer treat. The soup is so well loved in Provence, however, that pistou is often made in large quantities, covered with olive oil and kept for use in a winter version of the soup as well.

In addition to, or instead of some of the vegetables below, the soup can include spinach, Swiss chard, potatoes, pumpkin, or a small amount of turnip.

1/2 cup dried white beans
3 liters water
1/4 cup olive oil
2 garlic cloves, chopped
2 large leeks (white and green parts), cleaned and chopped
400 gr. ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
1 medium carrot, peeled and diced
60 gr. wax beans (yellow beans) or green beans, ends removed, cut in 3 pieces
salt and freshly ground pepper
4 small zucchini (about 1/2 kilo), cut in cubes
Pistou with cheese (see recipe above)
1/3 cup frozen peas
1 cup medium noodles
bowl of freshly grated Parmesan cheese (as an accompaniment)

Soak beans overnight in enough cold water to generously cover; drain thoroughly. Put beans in a large pot with 6 cups water. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Simmer uncovered for 1 hour, adding hot water occasionally so beans remain cov-



ered. Reserve beans in 3/4 cup of their liquid.

Heat 2 Tbsp. of olive oil in pot over medium heat. Add garlic and leeks and stir briefly. Add tomatoes and cook, stirring, about 5 minutes. Add carrot, yellow or green beans, white beans in their reserved liquid, remaining 6 cups water, remaining 2 Tbsp. olive oil and a pinch of salt and pepper and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer 30 minutes. Add zucchini and simmer about 10 minutes longer or until vegetables are very tender.

Prepare Pistou. After soup has simmered 40 minutes, add noodles and simmer 5 minutes. Add peas and cook 5 more minutes or until noodles are tender. Remove from heat and stir in pistou. Taste and adjust seasoning; serve immediately. Serve more grated Parmesan cheese separately. (It is best not to reheat this soup because pistou loses its fresh flavor but any leftovers are very good cold.) Makes 8 servings.

AVOCADO PESTO

Use this rich, easy-to-make sauce to top pasta or cooked vegetables. Choose the black-skinned avocado for the best taste and smoothest texture. Use mild or "pure" olive oil rather than virgin or extra-virgin for a more delicate taste that does not over-

power the avocado. You can make the pesto part ahead, but it is best to peel and add the avocado at the last minute.

2 medium garlic cloves, halved
1 cup fresh basil leaves (a 30-gr. bunch)
1/4 cup packed Italian parsley leaves or small sprigs of regular parsley
2 Tbsp. pine nuts
2 Tbsp. freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1 ripe medium-size avocado, (225 gr.)
6 Tbsp. pure olive oil or vegetable oil
salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

With blade of food processor turning, drop garlic cloves, one at a time, through feed tube and process until finely chopped. Add basil, parsley, pine nuts and cheese and process until basil and parsley are chopped. Peel and pit avocado and cut in a few chunks.

Add to mixture in processor and puree it. With blade turning, gradually add oil. Scrape down sides and process until mixture is well blended. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper. Transfer to a bowl. (The pesto can be made 2 hours ahead, covered with plastic wrap pressed directly on its surface and refrigerated.) Makes about 1 cup.

PASTA WHEELS WITH AVOCADO PESTO

For a colorful touch, you can garnish each serving of pasta with halved cherry tomatoes.

Avocado Pesto (see recipe above)
1 ripe medium avocado, room temperature
225 gr. pasta wheels, shells or other small round pasta shapes (about 3 1/2 cups)
1/4 cup toasted pine nuts

Bring pesto to room temperature before using. Peel and pit other avocado and cut it in small dice.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil; add salt, then pasta. Cook uncovered over high heat, stirring occasionally, about 7 minutes or until tender but firm to the bite. Drain well and transfer to a heated serving dish.

Add avocado pesto and fold it in with a rubber spatula until thoroughly blended. If mixture is too thick to blend easily, add 1 Tbsp. hot water and toss until blended. Taste and adjust seasoning. Add 2 Tbsp. toasted pine nuts and about half of diced



avocado and toss again. Sprinkle with remaining diced avocado and remaining pine nuts and serve. Makes 4 first-course servings.

Faye Levy is the author of Sensational Pasta (HP Books).

MATTERS OF TASTE

HAIM SHAPIRO

Habokrim, Kibbutz Merom Hagolan. Open noon to 4 p.m., 6 p.m. to midnight. (No kashrut certificate.)

For most people, the Golan is the focus of a political dispute. For others, it may be a place where fine wines are produced, but the Golan also happens to be cow country, and that is where you go for steaks.

At Habokrim, they keep things simple. The restaurant itself is made out of rough wooden logs, which complement the wooden tables and checked curtains. Table furnishings include home-made ceramic salt and pepper shakers, oil jugs and vinegar flasks. The only modern note is the air-conditioning, which runs full force during these hot days.

The proprietors of the restaurant say that all the food served there is kosher, but they have no kashrut certificate, because it is open on Shabbat.

Standard starters at Habokrim include humous and giant chopped vegetable salads, both with lots of fresh, fragrant olive oil. These were excellent, but our group also received a special first course, consisting of hot seasoned mushrooms. These were from a tin, and even the plenitude of garlic in which they had been sautéed did not redeem them.

On the other hand, we also tried the fried appetizers, including well-seasoned Moroccan cigars and delicate potato pastilles, and these were quite tasty.

However, in a restaurant like this it is well to leave room for the main course. In keeping with the nature of the restaurant, I tried something described as an Argentinian rib-eye steak. The Argentinian element, I was told, referred to the sauce in which the steak had been marinated before being grilled. My steak was excellent. It was very tender, juicy, and very tasty, no doubt as a result of the marinade.

Among other members of our party, those who ordered the grilled trout reported that it was satisfactory, but not extraordinary. Those who tried the lamb chops, on the other hand, found them far leaner and more tender than usually available. All the main courses came with huge portions of fresh chips.

With our meal, we drank the cabernet sauvignon of the nearby Golan Winery. I say with no shame that this red wine had been well-chilled. I know that this is not considered right in wine circles, but in view of the weather, I welcomed the chilled red wine and found it the perfect accompaniment for the meat.

I was also delighted by the fact that the meal ended with chunks of watermelon, a far better dessert for a heavy meal on a hot day than any sort of cake. According to the proprietors, those who don't want fresh fruit for dessert can have baklava.

Also served as a matter of course was fragrant Turkish coffee, the perfect antidote for the heavy food and wine.

As I was part of a party of visiting journalists, we did not receive a bill, but the proprietors assured me that the price of a meal for two, including steaks and a bottle of wine, should come to about NIS 110.

Even if they are exaggerating a little, and such a meal with a few extras comes to NIS 130, it is still good value.

TASTER'S CHOICE

My Father's House

By Angela Levine

Memories of family life have provided subject matter for many Jewish painters. Just think of Chagall's dream images of Vitebsk or Jankel Adler's portraits of his family circle; such recollections are usually linked to the *shetl* or to Jewish tradition.

This is not the case with Maya Gordon, a talented painter (Polish-born, a 1970 graduate of the Bezuel Academy of Arts and Design) now living in Holland. The memories surfacing in her large mixed-media paintings (inks, watercolors and pastels on paper) are not of Jewish life, but of parents who were communists and ordered their household according to a strict code of conduct.

An atmosphere oppressive and overwhelming to a child is cleverly evoked in Gordon's "Domestic Poem," a seven-piece painting depicting the massive furniture in her parents' living room. Viewed as if from a diminutive perspective are the gleaming polished doors of a wooden sideboard, a glass-fronted cabinet and high shelves holding books and family treasures. Objects to be admired but never handled.

This idea is emphasized by Gordon through her method of painting (in selected areas) onto silk paper, so that objects shimmer, mirage-like; and through the display of these paintings in a crowded, floor-to-ceiling arrangement, recalling that of icons decorating an iconostasis, the sanctuary screen which is the focus of worship in Russian Orthodox churches.

Pastels are the medium for two other sets of paintings by Gordon, both based on photographs found in *Golden Hands*, her mother's culinary bible which carried a preface by Joseph Stalin. One set, resembling black-and-white film-stills, illustrates step-by-step cooking procedures; the other depicts brightly colored, super-realistic representations of fresh and tinned food (with labels in Polish). These glistening images do not ring true; they recall when Gordon was a child.

Gordon's most impressive painting is also of a festive meal; this time in the tradition of the "Meal on the Table" paintings, popular in the Netherlands since the early 17th century. But her impressionistic version of this genre is in no sense a pastiche. This opulent repast, portrayed within a black-edged border, projects an atmosphere which is both funereal and claustrophobic. Like the books belonging to Gordon's father, this festive meal seems destined to be admired but never touched.

AT THE same venue, an exhibition of pastels and oil



Maya Gordon: Domestic Poem (detail), mixed-media and collage on paper (Herzliya Museum of Art)

paintings commemorates the 10th anniversary of the death of Raphael Matar, a young Israeli who studied art in London before settling in Paris, where he died in 1985 at the age of 36.

Almost all Matar's paintings are self-portraits revealing an obsession with sex. Whether depicting himself as a masked satyr or a nude with a double-headed profile, Matar's images are the direct expression of an unquiet spirit.

Although one can find much to criticize in these compositions, the imagery is haunting. There are points of comparison between Matar's paintings and those of Maryan M. Maryan (1927-77), a Holocaust survivor who also left Israel for Paris and ended his life there.

IN AN adjoining gallery, Efrat Shvili (b. Jerusalem 1955) has assembled a provocative photo-document of the "instant" housing projects which have sprung up in remote locations on either side of the Green Line, often without adequate infrastructure. Space precludes a detailed description of this project (which could be developed further), exposing the truth beyond the glib media promise of "a dream home in the hills." (Herzliya Museum of Art). All shows till July 29.

DRORA DEKEL of Kibbutz Kabri is not the first woman in Israel to express frustrations and aggressive feelings through her art. Dorit Yacoby, for example, crushes toys and "domestic items" into her canvases; Bianca Eshel-Gershuni contrives biographical altars from stuffed animals and voodoo dolls. What makes Dekel's approach different to that of Yacoby and Gershuni is her apparent tendency to "bury" her feelings within the design of her small, rather homely wall hangings.

Each hanging comprises a rectangle of handmade paper onto which small ornaments are drawn or affixed. The resultant patternings exploit, to an obsessive extent, some of the characteristics of Islamic design (small repeating motifs, the arabesque).

The ornaments are of two types: "prettifying" items, like strips of embroidery, buttons, artificial flowers, cosmetics; and sanitary objects, like condoms, bandages and razor blades (!) which Dekel has slid or woven between layers of paper fiber. Here they lie semi-concealed, like time-bombs ticking away until the moment of explosion. (Tova Osman Gallery, Tel Aviv). Till July 28.

Perils of Illustration

By Meir Ronnen

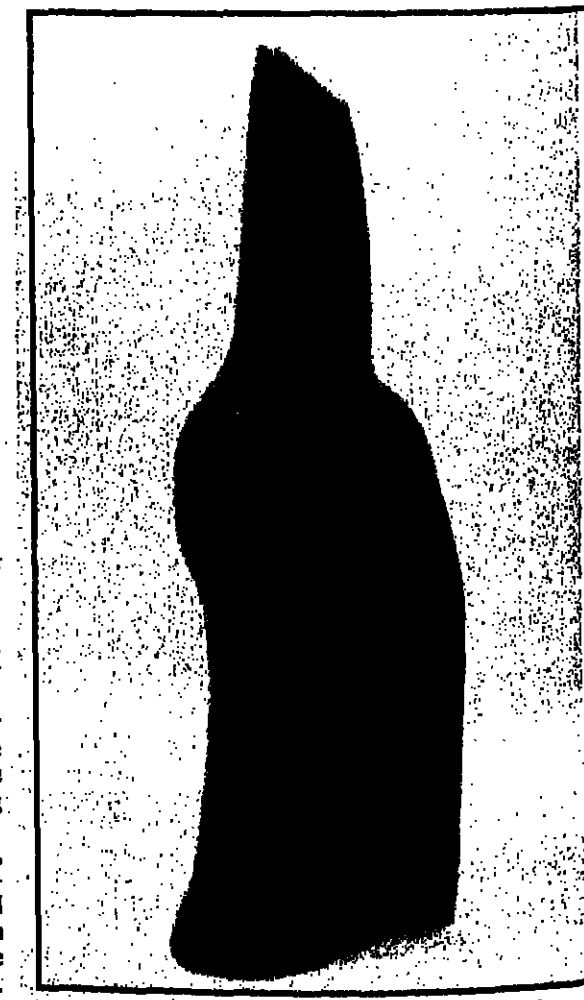
Much ado about not very much at the Jerusalem Artists House in the last set of shows before the summer break. Ada Pell (b. France, studied at the Avni Institute) shows painted assemblage with bold, simplistic axial compositions oddly reminiscent of the action painting of France's famous *tachiste* of three decades ago, Mathieu. Her husband Elik Pell (b. Israel 1927, a Beznel Academy graduate) shows smooth abstract bronzes with bird or human connotations and several, more impressive, wood carvings.

In an adjoining gallery, Alexandr Gurevich (b. Russia, 1944, here since 1993) shows a large array of meticulously executed mixed-media works and panels packed with messages and stories, much of it illustration in the modern Russian manner. Other painted panels to which are attached sketches or *objets trouvés*, follow partly in the footsteps of early Rauschenburg. I liked best his more straightforward but nicely whimsical monochrome etchings. Gurevich has something of an international reputation.

In yet another gallery at this venue, Ariela Wlitzky (b. Poland, 1949, here since 1957), a sometime animator who has worked for TV both here and in London, shows large Pop-posterish paintings of male and female nudes in a sexy recreational mode. In a separate room are a series of her miniatures, oils on wood, of trios of nudes in various symbolic settings and poses. Essentially illustrative, they are all essentially the same in conception, treatment and color.

In the mezzanine gallery, veteran painter/teacher/lecturer Hava Intrator-Barak (b. Kazakhstan, here since 1950), shows limited-palette mixed-media paintings (bituminous browns and greens) of idealized views of steep Jerusalem hillsides; and a few interiors. I prefer the deft and lighter touch of her pencil-and-wash views of Ein Kerem made on warmly toned paper, where occasional dabs of purple in the shadows add a touch of life to her carefully austere palette, which works better on paper. Each illustrative watercolor in this group is rendered with unfussy skill.

Down in the entrance gallery is yet another symbolic installation in the tiresome *Nidbach* series. This time Nir Lilo (b. Israel 1962, studied at the Avni) stands a telly on its side and dresses it in a cloth skirt lit from inside, the whole framed in a tent/box of white sheeting. The occasional screening is likely related to a few vertical black-and-white stills stuck on the sheeting. Two other smaller pieces don't bear mentioning. (Jerusalem Artists House). Till August 6.



Elik Pell: bronze (Jerusalem Artists House)

One Fine Day at the Bank

What does it take to get a little personal attention around here?

By Sam Orbaum

Otto and Hannah were having a fearful frans. "You know what's the biggest problem in this country?" Otto hollered at his wife. "A person can never finish a sen—"

"The biggest problem," she hollered back, "is that people like you never —"

"Never what?" he barked back.

"Never shut up long enough to —"

"There you go generalizing again, as if

"The phone rang, and she picked it up. He talked away mumbling to himself. "Who was she think she —"

"It's for you."

He took the phone, but before he could say hello, the line abruptly disconnected. He cursed softly. "Sonofa—"

"Shh!" Hannah had turned on the radio.

"Listen! There's been another —"

"We interrupt this program," the announcer said gravely, "to bring you an up-to-the-spot report from —"

"This is Ada Vahav, coming to you live from Kiryat Ata, where —"

"Hey," Otto cut in excitedly, "that's where —"

"Where we live, I know," Hannah stated. "Now would you —"

They listened as the reporter told of the bank heists. It was an epidemic and, as things are wont to be, speculation was rife, police were baffled, the public was up in arms and the press was having a field day.

The Palestinians complained that Israeli robbers were stealing their savings, the Syrians wondered just what kind of people they were trying to make peace with, and the BBC carried a special report on "The Jewish State: Tunnel at the End of the Light for the Chosen People were not such brilliant bankers as history had portrayed them."

Israel Radio assembled a (first-rate, probing) team of (thought-provoking, incisive) analysts to get to the bottom of the (nationwide) scourge (which had spun out of control).

The debate was, to be sure, riveting: "Tell ya, it's the Russian —"

"— the mafia? You don't know what you're talking about, it's the Palestinian —"

"You're both wrong, this is an Israeli thing, it's John Q. Public fed up with the banks and it's Peter robbing Paul to pay back Paul. If this keeps up we're gonna see every Tom, Dick and Harry doing a Bonnie and Clyde just to keep up with the process. Now is that Israeli or what?"

Hannah tutted. "Imagine. Regular people taking a morning off work to go and stick up a bank because they can't earn enough to pay the overdraft. And they're getting away with it! I tell you, it's crazy, where you going?"

"Who had half a mind not to tell her. That was Otto out. "Just because a person puts a hat means he's going somewhere?" With that, he was gone.

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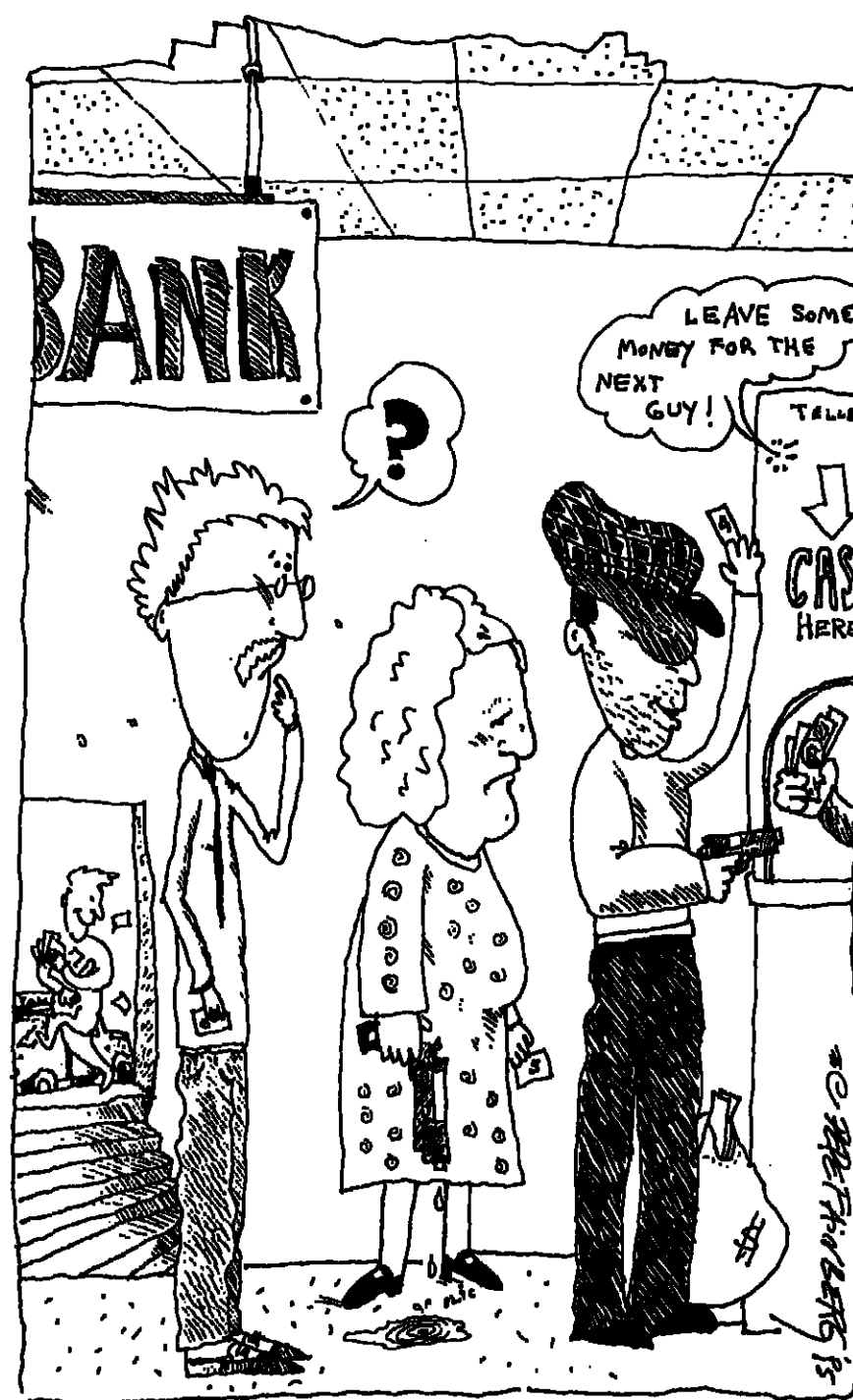
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no?" he called as they whizzed by. Strange, Otto thought, he'd never seen the Liebermans on a motorcycle before.

A couple of kids rollerbladed by, toting plastic Uzis and saying "bang, bang!" at everyone. And everyone said, "How cute."

Otto arrived at the bank just as Berg was coming out. Not Berg the travel agent, but Berg from the old-age home. Berg burst out of the bank, taking the steps three at a time, and leaped into a waiting taxi, ignoring Otto's friendly how do you do. It struck Otto as odd.

In the bank, Otto got in line behind Mrs. Levy, whose son was a manager at the bank on the other side of town. Mrs. Levy pretended not to notice Otto, even when he tapped her on the shoulder. Peculiar, he thought.

Then in walked Gluck the butcher's helper, taking his place behind Otto. To Otto's great surprise, Gluck said hello. They chatted for a while, discussing for a long time the merits of fresh versus frozen.

Lieberman from downstairs. "Nice day,

"So what brings you here?" Otto asked. It turns out Gluck was making a deposit. Of all things!

Everybody in line overheard. Each one insisted he take his place in the line. "You see that?" Otto said to no one in particular, "people can be so friendly sometimes."

"Next!" the teller said. It was Mrs. Levy's turn, but she wasn't paying attention. Otto prodded her, and as she stepped forward he wittily called after her: "Leave some money for the next guy!" She didn't smile. Like any good Israeli, Otto craned his neck to watch her transaction.

Ahal A withdrawal. She took the money and ran, pretending not to hear Otto saying she should give his regards to her son.

"Next!"

Otto smiled jovially at the teller and wished her a good morning. "What do you want?" she snarled.

"I'd like —"

"Get on with it, I don't have all morning."

"I'd like —"

The two kids with the plastic Uzis unexpectedly pushed in front of him and slipped a note to the teller. "We were in the middle of a transaction," one of them explained. Otto could only shrug.

The teller seemed to be having a bad day. It was the way she yelled "Nu?" at him, so that her eyes bulged, that tipped him off.

"Cash, please," he blurted.

"Don't have any," she countered. He'd never heard of such a thing. "But this is a bank!"

"That's right, mister, and it's first come first served. I'm not authorized to give any money unless you can provide proof of a weapon. It's a new directive."

"But I don't have a gun, I just want —"

"So go out and buy one. No gunny, no money, that's our new motto. Next!"

"Wait," said Otto. He whipped out his credit card. "Will this do?"

She laughed mirthlessly. "Don't be ridiculous."

Otto suddenly lunged forward, pressed the corner of the card against her throat, and announced his condition for sparing her life: "Gimme money!"

She swallowed hard. "All of it?"

Otto was losing his patience. He pressed harder on her jugular. "Give me," he hissed through clenched teeth, "a hundred shekels, take it out of my account, print out a receipt for me to sign and let me outta here or you've had it."

The teller blinked. "You mean you're not a robber?"

"Argghhhhh!" he explained. "I'm a client, a customer, an account holder, I've been banking here for 20 years and for 20 years I've been treated like I only come in here to rob you, and you know what? That's why I decided to come to the bank today, just to see what it takes to get a little personal attention around here!"

A number of robbers in the queue were getting impatient. "Yalla, I have to get back to the office," one of them muttered. "Don't interrupt!" Otto shouted. He felt liberated.

The staff managed to scrape together a hundred shekels from loose change no one had bothered stealing. Otto released his hostage so she could enter the withdrawal in the computer and print out the receipt.

He counted the coins and shoveled them into his pockets. "Thank you," he said to the teller. Triumphant, he straightened his hat and walked away.

A manager sprang up out of nowhere and barred the door. "Thought you could get away with it, eh?"

Otto kindly explained that he was not a robber. The manager called over a passing policeman. "Arrest this man," the manager ordered.

Otto showed them his receipt to prove his innocence.

The manager grabbed the receipt. "There's your proof," he said to the policeman. "This guy made a withdrawal without paying the service charge."

Otto blanched. "But I —"

"You've robbed my bank of NIS 2.10," the manager said. "Did you really think you'd get away with it?"

OTTO and Hannah were having a fearful frans. "You know what's the biggest problem in this country?" Otto hollered at his wife. "A person can never finish a sen—"

"The biggest problem," she hollered back, "is that people like you never —"

"Never what?" he barked back.

"Never shut up long enough to —"

"There you go generalizing again, as if

"The phone rang, and she picked it up. He talked away mumbling to himself. "Who was she think she —"

"It's for you."

He took the phone, but before he could say hello, the line abruptly disconnected. He cursed softly. "Sonofa—"

"Shh!" Hannah had turned on the radio.

"Listen! There's been another —"

"We interrupt this program," the announcer said gravely, "to bring you an up-to-the-spot report from —"

"This is Ada Vahav, coming to you live from Kiryat Ata, where —"

"Hey," Otto cut in excitedly, "that's where —"

"Where we live, I know," Hannah stated. "Now would you —"

They listened as the reporter told of the bank heists. It was an epidemic and, as things are wont to be, speculation was rife, police were baffled, the public was up in arms and the press was having a field day.

The Palestinians complained that Israeli robbers were stealing their savings, the Syrians wondered just what kind of people they were trying to make peace with, and the BBC carried a special report on "The Jewish State: Tunnel at the End of the Light for the Chosen People were not such brilliant bankers as history had portrayed them."

Israel Radio assembled a (first-rate, probing) team of (thought-provoking, incisive) analysts to get to the bottom of the (nationwide) scourge (which had spun out of control).

The debate was, to be sure, riveting: "Tell ya, it's the Russian —"

"— the mafia? You don't know what you're talking about, it's the Palestinian —"

"You're both wrong, this is an Israeli thing, it's John Q. Public fed up with the banks and it's Peter robbing Paul to pay back Paul. If this keeps up we're gonna see every Tom, Dick and Harry doing a Bonnie and Clyde just to keep up with the process. Now is that Israeli or what?"

Hannah tutted. "Imagine. Regular people taking a morning off work to go and stick up a bank because they can't earn enough to pay the overdraft. And they're getting away with it! I tell you, it's crazy, where you going?"

"Who had half a mind not to tell her. That was Otto out. "Just because a person puts a hat means he's going somewhere?" With that, he was gone.

BUT SERIOUSLY